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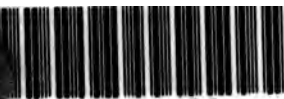
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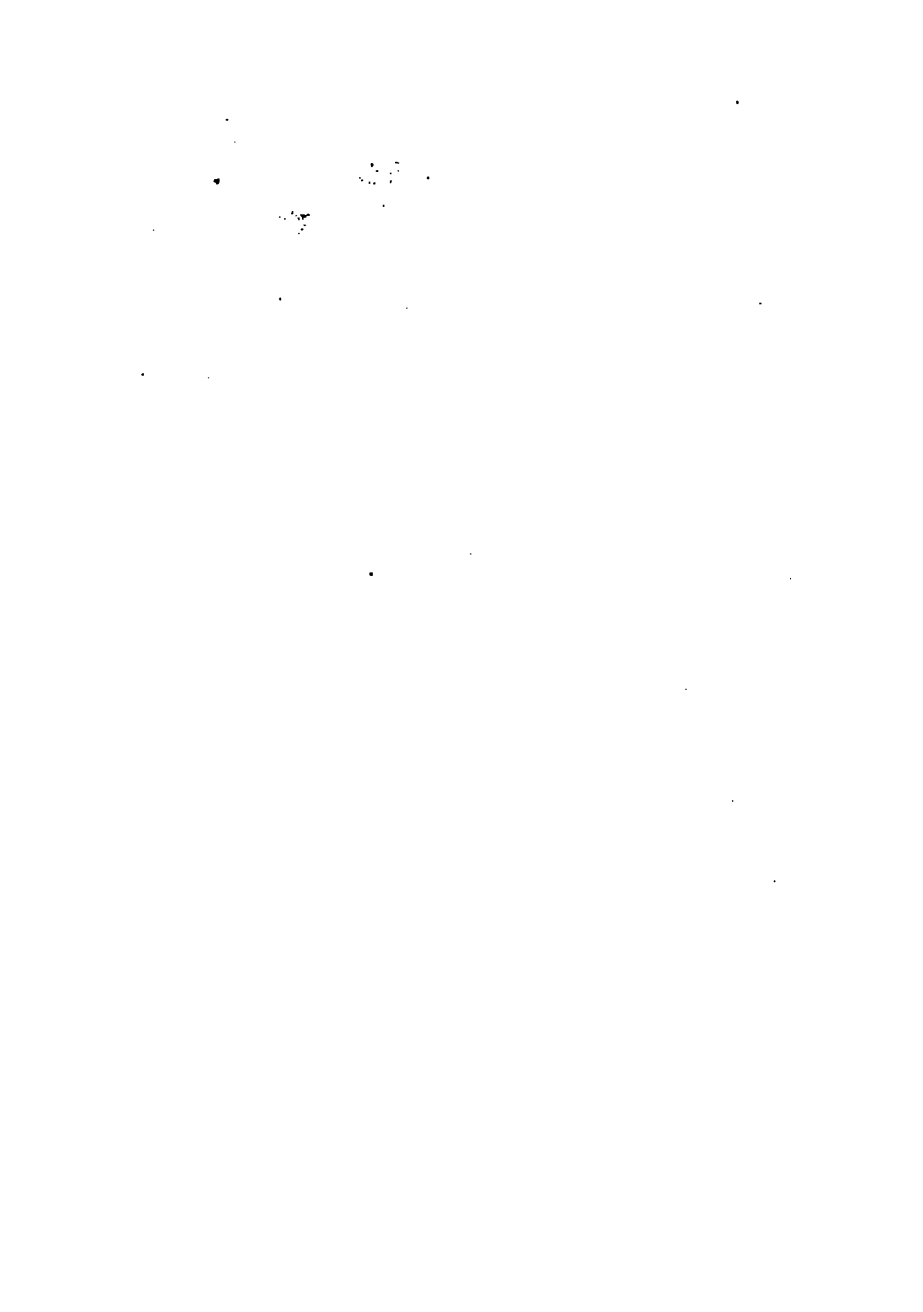
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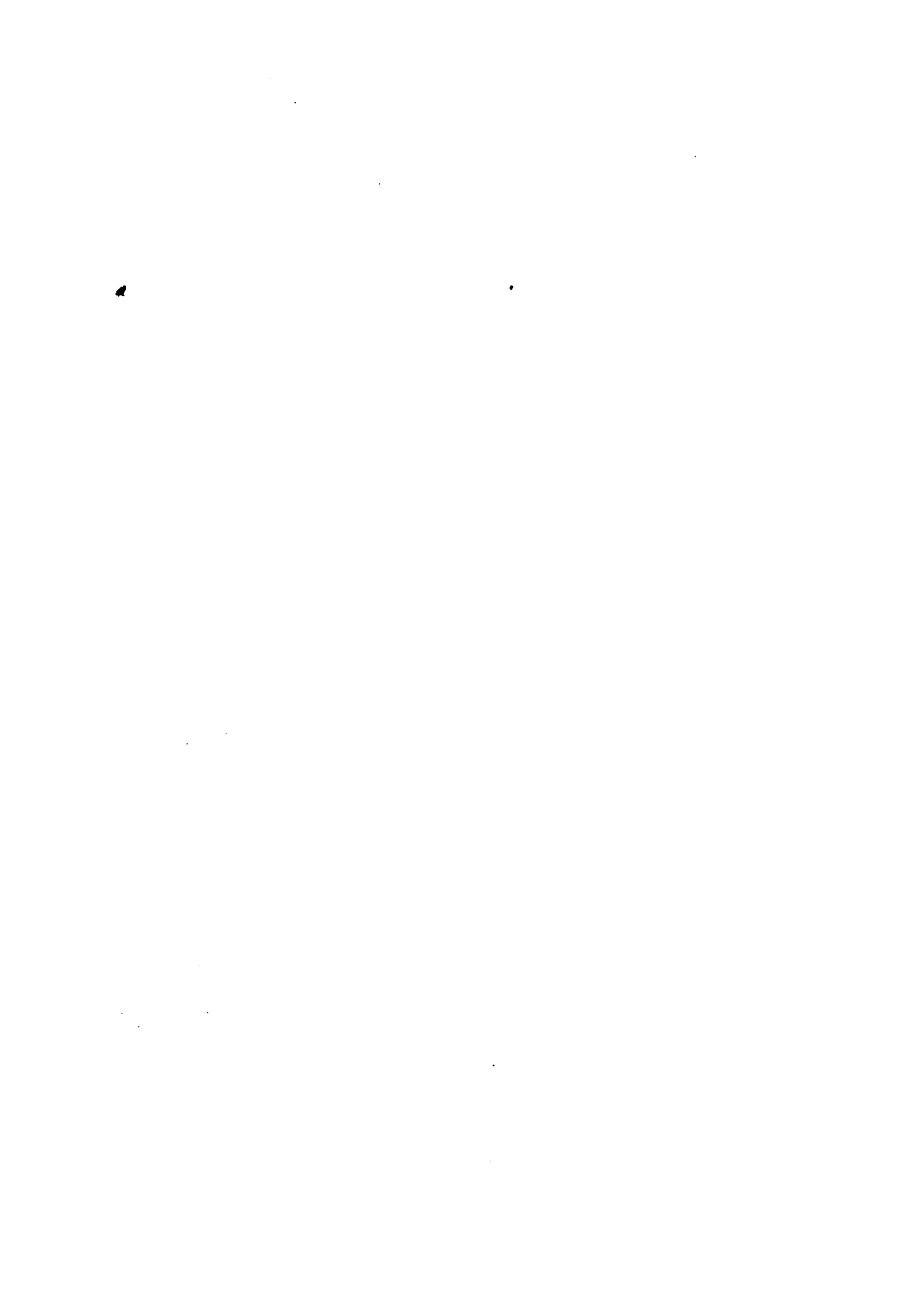
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How did the Lord Jesus Christ save Man?

A Lecture

BY THE

REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



JAMES SPEIRS

36 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON

1883

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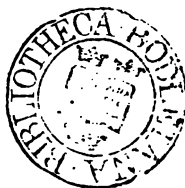
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HOW DID THE LORD JESUS CHRIST SAVE MAN?

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—LUKE xix. 10.

IN this brief sentence our Lord epitomizes the whole purpose of His incarnation—to restore and save perishing mankind. The object of our lecture this evening is to ascertain how this was effected.

In many quarters we should receive a very ready answer to our inquiry. We should be told that the Lord paid our debt; that He suffered the penalty due to our transgressions, thus satisfying Divine justice, and enabling God to forgive while maintaining His law inviolate. Those, however, who have accepted the doctrine advanced in our previous lectures, will be prepared to question the accuracy of this statement. We saw last week that sin is by no means simply a debt—that it is not even sufficiently described as merely a transgression, but that it is spiritual disease voluntarily contracted, and thus entailing on him who suffers it responsibility and guilt. Consequently, sin is not to be expiated by a payment, or by the endurance of any amount of suffering, nor can it be wiped away by the bare declaration of a pardon. It must be cured, the malady and disorder must be actually removed from the nature, or its effects will of necessity abide. There is nothing in pain to appease the Divine justice. Its hunger can never be satisfied until that which has been wrong is restored to

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right. To treat the innocent as the guilty, or to regard the guilty as innocent, so far from being in any way agreeable to justice, is a direct and iniquitous violation of its very first principles. For "he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord" (Prov. xvii. 15). Besides, our Saviour, as we have so often and so clearly seen, is not a distinct person from Jehovah, but is the incarnation of Jehovah—the Father manifested in the Son, that thus the Lord God of Israel might visit and redeem His people (Luke i. 68). If, then, salvation was not effected as so frequently supposed, "how did the Lord Jesus Christ save man?"

To answer this question, we must understand what salvation involved. Now the first necessity towards our deliverance was that we should be rescued from the power of hell. Prophecy had foretold, in many passages, that the long-promised Messiah should be a conqueror. Thus, to take a single example, we read: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, travelling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in Thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me: for I will tread them in Mine anger, and trample them in My fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (Isa. lxiii. 1-4). The Jews interpreted such passages literally; and, expecting that the Redeemer would deliver them from the yoke of foreign oppression, they rejected the Lord when He came amongst them, meek and lowly in heart, and having not where to lay His head (Matt. xi. 29, viii. 20). To us, at the present day, their mistake *is obvious*. We know that His kingdom was not of this

world (John xviii. 36), and that the political Israel represented the spiritual—the Church, constituted of those who are Israelites indeed, “in whom is no guile” (John i. 47). “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; . . . but he is a Jew who is one inwardly” (Rom. ii. 28, 29). As all the law of the Chosen People presented a shadow of good things to come (Heb. x. 1), relating to this true and living Church, so all their history, while literally true, was so recorded as to afford a parabolic illustration of the states and vicissitudes through which this Church, or the individuals of whom it is composed, are called upon to pass. Thus, the enemies of the political Israel represent the spiritual foes and tyrants that assail and oppress the souls of men. These, at the time of the Incarnation, were multitudinous and most mighty. For ages the world had been growing worse. As successive generations had passed away, they had not become extinguished. They still lived on in the other world; and since that world is near to this, and its influences penetrate hither, and continually affect, most forcibly and subtly, the characters of those who dwell here, this terrible accumulation of iniquity occasioned an irresistible pressure of evil tendencies upon the hearts and minds of men on earth, resulting at length in the spiritual slavery of the whole human race. Men were fast growing entirely unable to desire purely, incapable of judging correctly. The control of the powers of darkness became at last so complete, that they seized even the very bodies of mankind, adding, to the long list of “ills that flesh is heir to,” the new and horrible calamity of demoniacal possession.

From all this terrible weight of evil, then, the Lord redeemed us. For this purpose, the Son of God—the Divine Humanity, “that holy thing” born of the virgin and called the Son of God (Luke i. 35)—assumed “the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). In Himself “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose

name is Holy" (Isa. lvii. 15)—"who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven" (Ps. cxiii. 6), who chargeth His angels with folly, and before whose sight the very heavens are not clean (Job iv. 18, xv. 15)—could not approach our spiritual enemies, because no common ground existed on which the two could meet. Therefore He assumed a nature in which He could approach them—He stooped to bear our nature. And He took it on Himself not at its best or purest. Ah, no! Most literally the First became the Last. "For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Heb. ii. 16). Moreover, He did this in a genealogical line which concentrated, with exceptional intensity, the evil tendencies of fallen humanity. He was born of the tribe of Judah, a race descended from an incestuous origin; and in the house of David, which had repeatedly exemplified many of the most corrupt and fiercest passions of our nature. Into the manhood thus assumed by Him, therefore, were collated all the most wayward, the wildest, the most vitiated appetites of debased humanity. The unutterable condescension of the infinitely pure and holy, in thus submitting to wear a nature so disgraced and unclean, is the supreme marvel of the Incarnation. As expressed in the quaint, rugged language of the Elizabethan sonneteer,

"'Twas much, that man was made like God before;
But, that God should be made like man, much more."¹

By thus assuming a humanity like our own, however, Jehovah supplied Himself with a battleground where might be waged the warfare which should win our enfranchisement. Because, against the infirmities of the Lord's inherited nature, the infernals hurled their utmost force and malice. He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). Thus

¹ Dr. John Donne, *Holy Sonnets*.

throughout His life Jesus was a spiritual warrior, an unconquered victor, the perfect fulfilment of all the prophetic predictions which had told of a warlike Messiah. The three and thirty years of His earthly career are not to be measured by the deeds visible before the world. He was also unceasingly active in the spiritual spheres. In the language of the Apostles' Creed, "He descended into Hades,"—not into hell, as the ordinary translation says, but into the great invisible World of Spirits. In consequence of the work He accomplished there, the devils so often knew Him, and testified so repeatedly to His Divinity and omnipotence. For, fighting against them in the positions of disorderly ascendancy which they had there established, and by means of which they had acquired their perilous ascendancy over the minds of men on earth, He reduced the hells to subjection, restored our race to spiritual freedom, and fulfilled the promise which had declared, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion" (Isa. lix. 19, 20).¹ Thus, also, He supplied the first thing essential for the work described in our text, enabling Himself, by the new position which He had secured for man, "to seek and to save that which was lost."

Obviously, however, something more was needed to effect a complete deliverance. How did the Lord secure to men the right use and the full benefits of that liberty which He had won by redemption? Remember, Israel was redeemed when the nation stood on the eastern shore of the Red Sea. Yet only two adults out of all the tribes lived to enter the promised land: the rest died in the wilderness (Num. xiv. 26–34). So man, though enfranchised, would equally have perished, but

¹ More will be said of the positions of disorderly ascendancy acquired by the evil in the World of Spirits, in our lecture on the Judgment.

for some further provision of the Divine mercy. It is a grand thing for the slave when he feels his chains burst from around him, and hears the voice which pronounces him henceforth free. Suppose, however, that he is blind, and lame, and paralyzed: how then can he profit by his emancipation? This was precisely the spiritual condition of mankind at the time of the Incarnation. Wherefore it becomes necessary, having seen how the Lord won liberty for us by Redemption, that we should now inquire how He supplied to our enfranchised race the further indispensable gift of spiritual life.

Man was perishing, because he had cut himself adrift from God. The Lord's hand was not shortened that it could not save, neither His ear heavy that it could not hear; but man, by his iniquities, had separated between himself and God (Isa. lix. 1, 2). Now Incarnation re-established that communication with the Lord and heaven which had been intercepted, and which was in danger of becoming altogether closed. For the life of Jesus revealed the Divine nature to men. He came to do the Father's works; to show to mankind, which had befogged itself in densest ignorance of their heavenly Father's character, what He really was. He came to teach the Divine will, to substitute, for the inventions of heathendom, and the traditions of the scribes and elders, His own commandments, spoken with the authority of the Light of the world. Thus He enabled man again to see his God. He restored his capacity to understand Him, his ability to love and serve Him. It is impossible to estimate the new forces poured into human life from our Lord's manifestation upon earth, by His revelation of the Divine nature, the utterance of His pure doctrine, and His exhibition of a perfect pattern and example.

Great as were these benefits, however, they constituted the least portion of the Divine purpose in the Incarnation. They only lasted three and thirty years, when the Lord

left the earth, so far as visible presence was concerned, and returned to His state of essential Deity. Were these inestimable blessings, then, to decline afterwards into a mere beautiful recollection? Not so. Whatever advantages were wrought for man by the Incarnation were to be rendered everlasting. This perpetuity was secured by the process of Glorification. The Humanity, assumed in time, was made the inseparable, eternal person of the Godhead. Of course, the inherited infirmities, which had been indispensable to Redemption, opposed an obstacle to this further and enduring purpose of the Divine providence. Therefore they were put away. In the language of our Lord's longest recorded prayer, He sanctified Himself: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John xvii. 19). The Captain of our salvation was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). For every conquest in temptation not only availed to subdue the hell which was active in that particular assault, but in addition it removed from His nature the element of merely human weakness to which the temptation had appealed, and substituted in its place some attribute of Divine strength and purity. As a consequence, the Humanity, glorified at length with the Father's own self (John xvii. 5), became, in every respect, Divine. Hence Jesus testifies, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). Hence, also, the Apostle teaches, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 9, 10). Through such glorified Humanity, as we saw in our lecture on the Trinity, the Lord communicates His Holy Spirit; and by means of this, His own spiritual presence, He renders the benefits of His Incarnation perpetual to each and to all. He is nearer to you and me than to those who enjoyed His visible presence and personal communion; for He may be in us, inspiring every thought, quickening

every desire. Thus He sanctifies and regenerates all who will receive Him, and becomes our "Redeemer and Saviour, not for a time only, but to eternity."

Do we, then, make nothing of our Lord's Atonement? On the contrary, the doctrines of the New Church are most definite and precise upon the subject, although they undoubtedly present it under other than the ordinary aspects. It is certainly strange that a word so frequent in modern theology should occur only once in the entire New Testament; and stranger still that, in the recently revised translation, it should be eliminated altogether. In the Authorized Version, however, we find this solitary example of its use: "We also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Rom. v. 11)—for which last expression the revisers substitute "reconciliation." And for the simple reason that this is the true meaning of the Greek word, and the term by which it is invariably rendered in other passages. Indeed, even in English, "atonement" properly signifies the reconciliation, or putting "at one," of those who have been at variance. Consequently its subject is not God, who was never hostile to His fallen people, but, like the father of the Prodigal, while His estranged children were yet a great way off, ran forth to meet them; but it was man himself, perverse, debased, and corrupt. Therefore, in the above passage, the Apostle says that "we"—not, as is commonly supposed, God—but "we have now received the atonement;" and he beautifully describes the process by which we have thus received it in his statement, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us"—reconciled us, you perceive—"to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation"—or, as the word might be rendered, "atonement; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 18, 19). Because, in the person of Jesus Christ, as in a human form embodying a Divine

soul, Jehovah Himself descended into the wilderness whither we had wandered, in order to seek and save the lost.

But are we not taught to pray to God for Christ's sake, and does not this evidently imply that we plead His atoning or reconciling work? Here, also, we notice with astonishment that a phrase almost universal in modern Christendom exists but once in the entire Bible, and not even once in the revised New Testament! In the common version, however, we do once read, "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. iv. 32). It is usually very questionable taste to introduce foreign languages into the pulpit, but I think any one here present could give a better meaning to the original Greek words, which are simply *en Christo*, and should obviously be rendered, "in Christ." Accordingly, the revised translation reads, "as God also in Christ forgave you;" but the original would be more precisely rendered, "even as also God in Christ hath forgiven you." It thus exactly corresponds to the declaration already quoted, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. v. 19), and it perfectly harmonizes with the prophecy, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 25).

Is not Christ, however, the Mediator? Did not St. Paul declare, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus?" (1 Tim. ii. 5). Undoubtedly; but compare this statement with the assertion almost immediately preceding, "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (ver. 3). Undoubtedly Paul regarded Jesus Christ as his Saviour, and consequently he here identifies Him with God. Indeed, he repeatedly does this in his Epistles, expressly describing Him as "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5). When he speaks of "the man

Christ Jesus," therefore, he cannot possibly mean that Jesus Christ was merely a man. Indeed, our Lord's mediation and intercession can never be understood as that of one person pleading with another. Such an idea is in the highest degree dishonouring to God's love. The manner in which the Saviour is sometimes represented as exhibiting His wounds, with supplications and entreaties, may possibly endear *Him* to men, but to exhibit our Father in the heavens as requiring such inducements to persuade Him to forgive, is sheer calumny and scandal. This conception of our Lord's mediation is equally inconsistent with Divine omniscience; for if God knows all things, whence the necessity for this constant reminding? It also conflicts with His Divine justice; because, if the debt has been paid and the satisfaction complete, why should such an appeal be perpetually renewed? It is no less incompatible with our Lord's Divinity; since it exhibits Him in a position distinctly inferior and subordinate. More than all, it is contrary to the express words of Scripture: "At that day ye shall ask in My name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you" (John xvi. 26, 27). The first three Gospels all declare that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (Matt. ix. 6; Mark ii. 10; Luke v. 24). If this were so while He was yet infirm and unglorified, how much more is it the case now that He hath "ascended far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 10); and when unto Him is given all power in heaven and in earth? (Matt. xxviii. 18). Jesus is the Mediator, because His Humanity is the medium between that essential Divinity, which constitutes His inmost soul, and all the world. The remarkable phrase which the Apostle employs, "the man Christ Jesus," clearly limits the mediation of which he speaks to the human part of Jesus. This indeed intercedes, because it goes between God and man, and

provides for each the means of mutual access and communication. "Through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," we have boldness to enter into the holiest place, the veriest sanctuary of inmost Godhead (Heb. x. 19, 20). Through the same channel He also conveys to us the beneficently tempered influences of His Holy Spirit, whereby we are regenerated and saved. In fact, the supreme blessing of the Incarnation is that it has thus provided this eternal, all-sufficient medium.

The Scriptures, however, describe God as wrathful. We read that He is "angry with the wicked every day" (Ps. vii. 11). How, then, can we represent Him as pure unmingled mercy? Most certainly, we often do thus read of our heavenly Father's wrath; and the reason is because this is the actual and most real appearance to the wicked themselves. They inevitably suffer on account of their transgressions, and, almost of necessity, they attribute such suffering to the Lord. Yet He teaches, "Fury is not in Me" (Isa. xxvii. 4); and the beloved disciple, who perhaps enjoyed as full a knowledge of the Divine nature as was ever possessed by any one on earth, testifies, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). God is also unchangeable and infinite; wherefore, if we are to regard Him as wrathful and vengeful, we must believe Him eternally and unchangeably angry. But He is unchangeable and eternal in His Divine love and helpful pity. "I am the Lord, I change not: therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed" (Mal. iii. 6). "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isa. xlix. 15). Remember, however, what was stated in our last lecture as to the disorganizing effects of sin. It corrupts and vitiates the very structure of the soul. Just as the dyspeptic stomach rejects the most wholesome food with loathing, or the inflamed lungs find in every breath of

life an agonizing torture, so the nature that has become distorted and inverted by evil, will shrink from Divine beneficence itself, as from infinite malignity. You want a proof of that? Behold one in the Gospels. Jesus, who was love personified, dwelt in our world, going about doing good continually (Acts x. 38). Yet there were those who, at His presence, fell grovelling to the earth, and cried, "Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matt. viii. 29). Do you suppose our Lord wished to hurt them? O no! Their agony was but the utter repugnance of their corrupt and vitiated natures, when brought into contact with the sphere of His infinite purity and goodness. Therefore, since the Divine operation is thus inevitably felt by the wicked as wrath, the Lord in His word condescends to their low condition. He veils the light of His truth in dark clouds, in order that the weakest eyes may at any rate see that truth which is most indispensable to them—the truth, namely, which bids them flee from evil as the one hateful deadly thing. He appeals to the motive likeliest to reform them, for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cxi. 10); and then, if fear leads to amendment, and they ascend the path of repentance and regeneration, they gradually acquire truer conceptions of their God, and at length reach that perfect love which casts out all fear (1 John iv. 18).

Was not Christ a sacrifice? Yes, but a sacrifice is simply something made holy. The true idea of the Jewish sacrificial worship is expressed in the remonstrance, "Ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the Lord is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even His meat, is contemptible" (Mal. i. 12). The Levitical oblations are not to be interpreted as victims slain instead of the worshipper, but as gifts offered to satisfy the Divine hunger. Thus they typify the spiritual service of love and duty, for "the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not

despise" (Ps. li. 17). "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. xii. 1). Now in the Lord Jesus Christ this dedication was complete. His human nature became entirely submissive to the Divine, wholly sanctified, the perfect sacrifice of which every offering on the Jewish altars was a foretype. But this sacrifice was not vicarious, or in our stead; still less was it to appease Divine wrath. Its use was that it contributed to the glorification of our Lord's Humanity, and thus, opening the way between man and God, it effected an atonement, and reconciled those whom human iniquity had parted asunder.

How does this New Church doctrine agree with the frequent assurances that salvation is through the blood of Christ? We read that the hosts of heaven sang this new song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Rev. v. 9). Here, we may be reminded, we have a vision of the crucified Redeemer, while all the hosts of heaven are exhibited as joining their hymns in praise of His literal blood-shedding upon the cross. But is it so? Read the description which precedes: "I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth" (Rev. v. 6). Surely this is no presentation of the actual form and features of our Lord and Saviour. Evidently the description is figurative, relating, in fact, to the attributes of our Lord's Humanity; which are represented by seven horns, to signify His fulness of power, and by seven eyes, to indicate His completeness as to Divine wisdom. In the same way, however, His blood must also be understood

in some figurative or spiritual sense. Indeed, the most scrupulous advocate of a rigidly literal interpretation of Scripture must admit that he can neither drink the Lord's material blood nor wash therein; yet the Word, if it is to be understood merely in the sense of the letter, declares he must do both. Of what, then, is the Lord's blood the type?

Firstly, taken in a metaphorical sense, it is the symbol of His sufferings and death, which were inseparable from our Redemption. The conflicts with the powers of darkness, which effected our deliverance from hell, were most agonizing; as witness the scenes in Gethsemane and on the Cross. They also contributed to the Lord's glorification, for the Captain of our salvation was made "perfect through sufferings" (Heb. ii. 10). Necessarily, moreover, they were continued to the actual death of the maternal nature by crucifixion; because, so long as any element of hereditary infirmity adhered to our Lord's Humanity, it was incapable of full union with His Divinity, and thus could not contribute to the eternal purposes of His Incarnation. But they were not vicarious or in our stead. We should not have endured them if the Lord had not borne them. He indeed submitted to them for us, for our advantage, though not in our place. Without them there could have been no salvation, yet of themselves they contributed nothing towards salvation. This may seem a paradox, but an example will make it plain. When the first king of Italy, Victor Emanuel, was an infant in the cradle, the room in which he was sleeping was one night found to be in flames. A devoted nurse extinguished the fire, and nobly preserved her charge at the cost of her own life. Now observe: it was not the death of this woman which spared Victor Emanuel to be king of united Italy. If she could have saved him without perishing herself, he would equally have survived to reign. Conversely, if she, although heroically sacrificing herself, had failed to put out the

flames, or to extricate him from their fury, in spite of her generous self-abandonment he would still have died. It was her work, not her death, that rescued him; but, in the circumstances, the death proved inseparable from the work. So was it with our Lord. His victory, His Divine work, redeemed and saved us. The suffering was merely incidental to this work, which would have been impossible without it. This truth is tenderly expressed in a hymn often sung at revival meetings, where, let us hope, it sometimes provides an antidote to the wild doctrine of the atonement too frequently preached at the services of which it forms part :

“ But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed ;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry—
Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.

“ ‘ Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way,
That mark out the mountain’s track ? ’
‘ They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back.’
‘ Lord, whence are Thy hands so rent and torn ? ’
‘ They are pierced to-night by many a thorn.’ ”¹

Not Divine wrath, but Divine love and absolute self-surrender caused our Lord to suffer. He bled from contact with the thorny wilderness, whither He had come “ to seek and to save that which was lost.”

There is a further and purely spiritual meaning of the Lord’s blood, suggested by a consideration of the statement, “the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Lev. xvii. 11). This is a physiological truth of the very first moment. All the strength received from the food passes into the blood, and by means of the blood is distributed to every part of the body. Similarly, the soul in itself is lifeless. To build up its structure it needs a spiritual

¹ Elizabeth C. Clephane : *There were ninety and nine.*

equivalent to the blood, and it finds this in the Divine truth. For the Word of God contains precepts and principles adequate to sustain every department of our life. Whatever the conditions and circumstances into which we are brought—our business, our domestic interests, our studies, our pleasures—they all draw their nourishment from the Divine Word, and are healthful and prosperous, orderly and happy, in proportion as they are built up of the elements which it contains. Now the Incarnation empowered the Saviour to communicate this vital force more fully, and enabled us to receive it in richer measure. It was thus a quickening of the pulses of the world—a pouring of new life-blood into the heart of humanity. We are washed in this blood when we become clean through obeying the Word the Lord has spoken (John xv. 3) ; indeed, since He alone worketh in us “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. ii. 13), He Himself washed us “from our sins in His own blood” (Rev. i. 5). At the same fountain we quench our spiritual thirst, by accepting His gracious invitation, “Drink ye all of it ; for this is My blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matt. xxvi. 27, 28). Through the same agency we conquer in temptation ; for “they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. xii. 11). Whatever is ascribed to the Lord’s blood is spiritually accomplished by means of His Divine truth ; wherefore, when salvation is declared to be effected by the blood of Christ, we should understand the statement as teaching that it is the result of this truth.

Thus both senses of the Lord’s blood, the metaphorical and the spiritual, unite in His works of redemption and salvation ; since His sufferings and death were inseparable from His restoration to man of mental and moral liberty, and His bestowment upon him of His regenerating truth. Hence, “without

shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. ix. 22); because deliverance from sin—which is the true force of the word "remission" or "putting away"—is only secured by the work effected through the sufferings of the Lord, and the consequent appropriation and use by man of His Divine truth. Man himself, also, must spiritually suffer and die, if he is to be made a partaker of the Saviour's eternal benefits. He, too, must take up his cross and follow the Lord (Matt. x. 38), crucifying the old man (Rom. vi. 6) "which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," and putting on "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. iv. 22, 24); that thus, dying unto sin he may live unto righteousness (1 Pet. ii. 24), and, by such spiritual blood-shedding, obtain that remission without which he can never see the kingdom of God (John iii. 3).

The supreme and essential signification of the Lord's blood, therefore, is His Divine truth, which is the instrument through which He accomplishes all His beneficent works in our behalf. This is precisely the doctrine of the text: "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." As we saw in our lecture on the Second Advent, the Son of man is the name which describes the Lord as to His Divine truth. And it is by enabling us to understand and live this truth, through the communication of His "spirit of truth," that the Lord regenerates and saves us.

Therefore, also, the means by which we accept and appropriate His salvation are all summarized in the word Faith. Because faith is a belief in the truth, evinced by obedience to its requirements. It is a trust in Him who is the Truth, sufficiently ardent and active to induce us to confide our whole welfare to His direction, by implicitly living according to His commandments. Hence faith can never be Faith Alone. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy

faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. ii. 17, 18, 26). It is only the "faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6) that enables us to lay hold upon the salvation of our God. And the Good Shepherd, by the work which He accomplished when He descended into the wilderness whither mankind had wandered, that He might seek and save that which was lost, has made this possible for every soul. Henceforth, we may all be numbered with those of whom He says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John x. 27). He redeemed us, that we might be free thus to follow Him. The whole Plan of Salvation is expressed in the apostolic words, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. . . . Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 19, 20).

M A N

Spiritual Being Ruined by Sin

A Lecture

BY THE

REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



2

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MAN : A SPIRITUAL BEING, RUINED BY SIN.

“ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth ” (GEN. i. 26).

IN our last lecture we endeavoured to show somewhat of the light which the doctrines of the New Church cast upon the being and character of the Deity. We saw that they exhibit Him as one, in essence and in person ; and that they represent the Lord Jesus Christ, in His undivided glorified humanity, as the only God of heaven and earth. It now follows, in due succession, that we should consider the subject of Man, the image and likeness of God ; which we propose to do both as to his original condition, when created in order and integrity, and as to the changes introduced into his nature and circumstances by the operation of evil.

Firstly, then, as to the original condition and true order of mankind. This is indicated in the text : “ God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” Whatever we know concerning the nature and character of God thus becomes an important clue to our right understanding of man. For instance, God is one ; “ the first of all the commandments ” being, “ Hear, O Israel ; The Lord our God is one Lord ” (Mark xii. 29). The

fundamental truth with respect to man is also that he is one. Each human being is himself, distinct from all other creatures whatsoever. He is endowed with personality, and enjoys his own separate individual existence; and this individuality is the ground of his deepest blessings.

But God, while one, is also three, comprising, in the undivided person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Similarly, although man is one in person, he includes the three constituent essentials of soul, body, and their united operation, the removal of either of which would destroy his manhood. We propose, then, to examine each of these essentials of the human trinity a little more in detail.

The soul is the real man, the immortal part which survives for ever. For as "God is a Spirit" (John iv. 24), so man, God's image and likeness, must be a spirit too. Now the primary fact in connection with the human soul or spirit is that it includes two great divisions, called respectively the Will and the Understanding. It is indeed by virtue of this double organization that man is fashioned in God's image and likeness, his Understanding forming the Divine image, while his Will constitutes the Divine likeness. For the Will is constructed to receive and appropriate love poured into it from the Lord. Its activity consists in desire, affection, and delight. It supplies the motive energies of life, and thus composes the deepest ground of character. Every man is such as his Will is; a truth recognised in the expression, "Hit a man in the heart, and you hit him all over." The Understanding, on the other hand, is adapted to imbibe truth or wisdom from the Lord, and manifests its activity in thought, reason, and intelligence. Its function is to grasp and retain the knowledge necessary to guide us, to compare the various facts and propositions that come within our cognisance, and to

estimate their value and their practical relation to our lives. Thus the Understanding qualifies the man, and determines his ability to accomplish the various objects he desires; for however pure the Will may be, and whatever the ardour of its good affections, it is entirely impotent until supplemented by an instructed Understanding. Thus the Will and the Understanding are mutually necessary and indispensable to one another. Neither can act alone; and the character is well balanced, and the life happy, just in proportion to their orderly conjunction.

The necessity for this union is reflected in the peculiar dual construction so conspicuous in Scripture; as in its frequent coupling of the words Jehovah and God, Jesus and Christ, Master and Lord, mercy and truth, justice and judgment, loving-kindness and faithfulness, poor and needy, or, as in our text, image and likeness. All these instances, the number of which might easily be increased almost indefinitely, contain a reference to both halves of our spirit, the Will and the Understanding. Thus the Divine Word, rightly interpreted, constantly appeals to them both; and by implication admonishes us of the need to unite them in our every action. The impulses of the Will should be strengthened and guided by the truths treasured in the Understanding; while the knowledge incorporated with the Understanding should be vivified and rendered practically efficacious by the loving affections and exalted motives which animate the Will.

The soul or spirit, however, is enveloped by the body,—indeed, we may say it is surrounded by two bodies. Its nearest environment is the spiritual body, which is organized of spiritual substance, and adapted to furnish means of activity to the Will and Understanding in the spiritual world. But although the chief purpose of the spiritual body is thus postponed until we shall have passed from this present sphere, it still exists here. In

the words of the apostle, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44); not, you observe, There is a natural body now, and there is going to be a spiritual body at some unknown future. The spiritual body already exists in every one of us, and is actually the foundation upon which the natural body is sustained. For the spiritual body lays hold, as it were, of the material particles that compose the natural frame, and builds them up into the human form; preserving them in life, and giving to them the cohesion necessary to constitute them into a body at all. And lastly, surrounding this spiritual body, there is the material body itself; with which we are all so familiar, and which many, it is to be feared, consider the real and only man, but which, rightly understood, is nothing more than his outermost and merely temporary covering. For at death—as we shall see in our lecture on the Resurrection—the material body is put away, never to be resumed, and the man continues to live in his spiritual body, a real man for ever.

Besides the soul and the body, however, a third essential is necessary to complete the human trinity. Both must unite their energies in operation to produce a living, active man. Intrinsically, you and I are souls; but it would be obviously useless for me, as a soul, to attempt to speak to you as souls. My spiritual forces must invoke the aid of my bodily powers; affection and thought must flow down into the organs of speech, and the whole series of my faculties, spiritual and natural, must combine in one joint effort, or I should remain unintelligible. Equally in vain would your souls strive to listen, unless the attention of the mind found a ready helper in your physical ears, and—we may add—in the eyes, which so assist the hearer. It is the same in the other world. The spiritual energies, which essentially constitute the man, still need embodiment in a fitting organization, and live by virtue of the united action of

the inner forces and the outward instrument. As expressed by the Laureate,

“Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;”¹

and there, as here, life will consist in the combined operation of the two, the soul acting through the body, and the body acting from the soul. It was so with the Lord. The Father, or Essential Divinity, which constituted His soul, and the Son, or Divine Humanity, in which that soul was embodied, united together to produce the operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby Divine Life is imparted to the world. Thus there is a trinity in man analogous to that which exists in God ; and just as in man the soul, the body, and the life resulting from their union, form but one personality, so is it in the tri-une God, of whom man is the image and likeness.

Having affirmed the resemblance of man to his Creator, the text continues : “ Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.” Here we find man endowed by the God of creation with sovereignty over all His other works. Now what is the ground of this supremacy ? So far as we have yet seen, the difference between man and the lower animals appears rather one of degree than of kind. They possess certain analogues of the Will and Understanding. They are animated by vigorous desires ; and the strength of their affections can be doubted by none who have witnessed their love for their offspring, or their attachment to those who are kind to them. Neither are they incapable of mental activity, the processes of instinct indeed exciting the marvel of all, and suggesting some of the profoundest problems which exercise the ingenuity of the most thoughtful students of natural philosophy.

¹ Tennyson : *In Memoriam*, xlvii.

So, too, the life of animals is intrinsically spiritual, since there is no life in mere matter. On reflection, moreover, it will be found that the life which animates them constitutes a spiritual body, as it were, existing within the outward material shape,—a form of life, which seizes the material elements received from their food, and from the air and earth, building them up into an organic structure, and holding them together in connection and stability. If, then, the points of similarity between man and the animals are so marked, and the beasts seem to share so largely in his spiritual peculiarities, what is the ground of his unquestionable and immeasurable superiority above all the lower orders of creation ?

The New Church doctrines declare that man's supremacy consists in his possessing a degree of life exclusively his own, which is shared by no inferior creature whatsoever. This degree, called in the technical language of theology the Human Internal, is the very inmost sanctuary of man, and forms a plane of life above or within the soul or spirit previously considered. It altogether transcends the sphere of human consciousness, and, except as learned by instruction, would be utterly unknown to us, either as to the fact of its existence, or as to the uses which it serves. Yet it is of the most essential importance in connection with our deepest, loftiest interests. For this Human Internal is the Lord's entrance to the soul, the point of immediate contact between the Creator and the creature, whereby, in the words of the American philosopher, "God enters by a private door into every individual."¹ The secret access and possibility of inmost communion which the Lord thus obtains, are the ground of every distinctly human prerogative. The ability to acquire a conscience and recognise the bonds of principle, the certainty of our immortality, whatever—in short—renders man a being "capable of God," is the result of this supreme

¹ Emerson : *Intellect*, Essay xi.

faculty, this inmost sanctuary, this internal region of his nature into which the Lord alone has entrance.

But this inmost degree so utterly transcends our experience, it lies so far beyond the reach of the understanding to realize, the precise manner in which it contributes its essential and exalted uses, that it needs, and indeed admits, of no further consideration at this time. It is enough for us to know that it exists, even in the very worst. It is well that we should know this; for the knowledge may be a ground of effort to amend the fallen, and of hope to encourage us with the possibility of success. Our practical concern just now is with the middle term of the human trinity, the soul, or spirit, with its twofold division into the Will and Understanding; and our next business, preliminary to a statement of the injury wrought in its constitution through the operation of evil, must be to investigate a few of the principal laws of the Divine Providence for its regulation and welfare.

The first of these fundamental laws, then, is that which maintains inviolable the freedom of the human Will. Sometimes people ask, Why were we made able to sin? Why are we not forcibly held by the Almighty in the paths of order? The reason is simply, because, if so, we should not be men but mere automata, moved by irresistible impulses imposed upon us from without; or at best we should range no higher than the animals. But the Lord, in His infinite love, desired beings nobler than these. He yearned not only for feeders upon His bounty, but for children of His love, capable of receiving from Him the spiritual blessings of affection and intelligence, and of reciprocally uniting themselves with Him, their Divine Benefactor. Therefore, in all the dealings of His providence, He inviolably respects our human liberty, since this is the indispensable condition of this voluntary acceptance and reciprocal conjunction. Our liberty of Will, that is; for it is necessary to distinguish

very precisely between the freedom to act and the freedom to will. Obviously we are not at liberty to *do* everything we please. Many of us often desire to accomplish things that lie wholly beyond our scope, although they frequently appear to us intrinsically good and useful. But we are always free to *will*. No power on earth, in heaven, or in hell can force us to choose the wrong rather than the right. Nothing but our own deliberate determination can betray us into this perversion. The freedom of the human Will is thus the inalienable heritage of man.

To guide us in the enjoyment of this supreme gift, the Lords endows us with rationality. He enables us to see the truth ; we can perceive the folly of self-indulgence, the wisdom of restraint, the desirableness of conforming to laws not immediately agreeable. Thus acting from liberty and according to reason,¹ we are dignified with ability to become participants in the process of our own regeneration. Our Lord renders us fellow-workers with Himself in His Divine purpose, "Let *us* make man," and freely and intelligently we can co-operate with Him in the elevation of our character to the standard of truly human excellence.

Closely connected with this fact of man's free-will, we find a second law which defines the various degrees of human life, and the relationship which connects them one with another. It is patent to all that we are so constituted as to be able to concern ourselves with widely different interests. The nearest, the most immediately and imperatively pressing of these interests, are those which arise out of our animal necessities, prompting us to supply ourselves with food, clothing, and shelter. Above these rank the claims of intellectual life, the appetite for knowledge, the desire to exercise our rationality in the discernment of principles and the

¹ Swedenborg : *Angelic Wisdom concerning the Divine Providence*, 71.

intelligence of truth. Highest of all, we can enjoy the activities of the cleansed, regenerated heart, and seek after the fulfilment of its aspirations, and the satisfaction of its deep interior yearnings. Now the three ranges of capacity thus indicated are scientifically defined in our theology as the natural, spiritual, and celestial degrees. Every one is born into the natural plane, beginning life, in fact, on a level with the animals, but with potentialities indefinitely greater. If he governs this lowest degree according to the laws of Divine Truth, abstaining from evil because it is sin, and doing right from a principle of duty, he becomes a good natural man. If, then, he further learns and loves the truth for its own sake, and makes reverence for the Divine commandments and an intelligent delight in heavenly knowledge the guiding principles of his conduct, he develops within himself the spiritual degree. And supposing him to rise into the higher love of goodness, and of the Lord who is Himself the All-good, reaching a state which values truth only as a means of attaining to goodness, and at once transmutes the acquirements of the understanding into the hearty service of the life, then is he a celestial man, the very likeness of God Himself. Our Creator's purpose is that every one of us, in the exercise of his own free choice, should pass through all these stages, thus reaching the highest possibilities of our wondrous complex nature.

A third important principle of human life is the formative and organizing power of our daily conduct. In regard to outward things we find this illustrated by a thousand experiences. The blacksmith, through the constant swinging of his heavy sledge, acquires those "muscles of his brawny arms" as "strong as iron bands"¹ with which the song has made us familiar. Similarly, the surgeon gains delicacy of manipulation, the artist keenness and precision of sight, the musician sensitiveness

¹ Longfellow : *The Village Blacksmith*.

of ear ; while, conversely, every member or faculty disused or misemployed, loses at length the capacity for useful action. Every one thus finds his life influenced, his very bodily structure modified, by his most frequent practices and habits. Our greatest poet expresses a universal truth in his pathetic lament,—

“ And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer’s hand.”¹

Because the law is still mightier in its spiritual relationships. The life of our affections and thoughts, of our motives and principles, ever tends to perpetuate itself. That which we do to-day, we shall be more disposed to do to-morrow ; the day following we shall do it with still greater readiness ; until the bands we so lightly tie round ourselves at the beginning, become unbreakable chains, either to fetter us, hand and foot, in the dungeons of moral and physical degradation, or to hold us securely to the anchor of our safety, amid the stormy blasts and billows of temptation. Who can measure the power of habit ? Our daily conduct is thus moulding the very fabric of the soul ; it is modifying its organization, and building up the spiritual body in conformity with the things we love and the principles we trust. The Lord’s intention in this law is, of course, that obedience to right should become every day more spontaneous and delightful, and consequently more consistent and perfect.

A fourth important factor in human development is the law of Heredity. We are so constituted by our heavenly Father that parents transmit to their offspring characteristics like their own. Of course this is conspicuous with regard to bodily features ; but it is equally certain, in connection with mental and moral peculiarities, that parental idiosyncrasies are perpetuated in their children. Would that fathers and mothers were wise

¹ Shakespeare : *Sonnet cxi.*

enough to rise to the height of the responsibilities thus devolving on them, and to resolve, so far as their ability extends, that they will not burden their innocent unborn offspring with tendencies towards evil as difficult to master as some of those they have themselves encountered ! The object with which this law was imposed upon us, however, was doubtless that virtuous dispositions might descend from age to age, with a continual increase, as time rolls on.

A fifth momentous law of Providence is that which connects man simultaneously with both the worlds. As to the material body and lower animal nature, he of course belongs to the natural creation, and is raised but little above the brutes. As to the soul, he shares the life of the spiritual world, continually receiving into his will and understanding influences flowing thence, and by virtue of this connection occupying the pinnacle of greatness indicated in the language of inspiration, when rightly translated, "Thou hast made him a little lower than God, and hast crowned him with glory and honour" (Ps. viii. 5). As "little lower," that is, as the distinction between the Infinite and finite admits ; for since man is the image and likeness of God, what higher being can exist, save God Himself ? Man, then, is in connection with the natural and spiritual worlds at the same time, and receives many of his most potent impulses from the spiritual world, through the interior and unseen side of his nature. As good people pass away thither, they consequently strengthen the forces of good that operate from that world here. And the design of Providence in instituting this law was that men and women upon earth should thus be helped on their heavenward way, and, as they themselves pass into the unseen spheres, should swell the stream of holy influences which are guiding and strengthening other pilgrims on their journey towards the same blissful home.

Having thus surveyed the spiritual constitution of

man, and noted some of the principal laws of the Divine Providence for securing his welfare, it will be a comparatively brief and simple task to show how he has become ruined through the operation of sin. Into the origin of evil and the details of the Fall (Gen. iii.) we have no intention to enter—except thus far : man, being endowed with freedom, abused his liberty and perverted the accompanying rationality, and thereby fell. Not at once into any gross transgression, but simply by inverting the degrees of his life, choosing a lower instead of the highest good. Thus he took the first step in the downward course, which at length resulted in positive evil. The result was, however, that every law of the Divine Providence which was intended to ensure his stability in goodness, became for ages the means of perpetuating and extending his disordered condition. The organism of the soul, the relation and balance of its faculties, were distorted and corrupted, and the vicious tendencies of the race increased and strengthened, until the state was reached described in the sad language of the prophet : "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it ; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores" (Isa. i. 5, 6). The law of Heredity handed down to succeeding generations this deteriorated spiritual stamina, the iniquity of the fathers being visited upon their children, according to the Lord's solemn warning (Ex. xx. 5). Finally, as increasing millions of base and sinful spirits passed into the other world, they entirely perverted the stream of influence coming thence to the earth, and produced a torrent of evil forces which at length culminated in the horrors of demoniacal possession.

The ruin wrought by sin is therefore organic in its character, not merely forensic or judicial. The danger is not because man, by his wicked rebellion, has provoked God to anger. The Divine disposition towards

the sinner is always one of infinite, unchanging mercy. "The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps. cxlv. 8, 9). "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke vi. 35). "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). The peril is not from God's wrath: the danger is that man, by persisting in evil, had inverted the true order and destroyed the very constitution of his life. Consequently it is an organic cure which the Lord proposes: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). Observe, He does not say, I will forbid his entrance: His words are, "He cannot see the kingdom of God." For this is the simple, most solemn, truth. The spiritual organization of the wicked has been wilfully corrupted and perverted; and just as the inflamed eye shuts out in agony the blessed light of day, so they *cannot* see the radiance of that heavenly home where the Lord desires to prepare a place for every soul.

In what manner the Divine Saviour has restored our spiritual freedom, and provided us with the means of arising from this condition of disease and death to one of salvation and life, we shall strive to show in our next lecture. Meanwhile and at all times, let each lay to heart the warnings of the Word: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xviii. 31).



The Inspiration and Interpretation of the Word of God

A Lecture

BY THE

REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



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THE INSPIRATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE WORD OF GOD.

"Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law" (Ps. cxix. 18).

WE are taught, in the Doctrines of the New Church, that "The Church is a Church by the understanding of the Word, and according to it; a noble Church if in genuine truths, an ignoble Church if not in genuine truths, and a ruined Church if it be in falsified truths."¹ If, therefore, as we tried to prove in our first lecture, the Christian Church is already abolished, this must be because it has lost or perverted the true understanding of the Word; and if a New Church or dispensation has been inaugurated in its place, it must be through the restoration of such true understanding by the Lord. Accordingly, the New Church claims such a restoration as its fundamental characteristic. It is based upon the fact that the Lord has caused new and brighter light to break forth from His Divine Word. Thereby, as we saw last week, He has effected His Second Advent, coming, as He came before, in the character of the Word; not, however, as the Word made flesh (John i. 14), but by revealing the Word as filled with spirit and life.

Certainly the necessities of the religious world require some such revelation. For the progress of the last

¹ Swedenborg, *The Doctrine of the New Jerusalem concerning the Sacred Scripture*, 77.

hundred years, glorious and beneficent as it has undoubtedly been in many respects, has by no means proved entirely favourable to a just reverence for the Word of God. Science has explored the material universe, and interpreted phenomena previously obscure. Geology, having read the record of the rocks, testifies that creation, far from being the work of six days, occupied thousands of centuries; whence arises an apparent collision with the early chapters of Genesis. Astronomy has measured and counted the stars, and reports most of them to be stupendous suns; thus coming into conflict with a simple acceptance of many predictions of prophecy. Political and social science and philanthropy, grown more discriminating and sensitive, question the wisdom and even the morality of various parts of Scripture. Whence, they ask, is the prominence assigned to an insignificant and imperfectly civilised people like the Jews? Why was such importance attached to their ritual?—such seeming approval expressed for their ferocity and coarseness? Then, again, the authorship of certain books in the Word is declared doubtful. Sometimes traces of a double origin are apparent, as in those portions of the Pentateuch distinguished by the Elohist and Jehovistic peculiarities. In short, the Bible has been put into the crucible of modern criticism, with the result that many time-honoured opinions respecting its nature and authority must be admitted as untenable. The consequence is that faith in the Word of God is tottering. Not a few regard all veneration for its sanctity as superstition. Others rank it with the Vedas and the Zendavesta, or place it on a level with the works of Plato, Aristotle, and the other ancient sages; deeming it, indeed, one of the most interesting sacred books of antiquity, embodying the highest wisdom of a bygone age and race, but with no claim whatever to Divine supremacy and origin. Even those most reverently disposed regard it eclectically,

and accept or reject its statements at their pleasure, without any clear principle as to what should constitute a revelation from God, or how such a revelation should be inspired or interpreted.

Now we believe that the master-key to unlock all these difficulties is suggested in the language of our text, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." For its complete discernment, the Word requires an opening of our faculties, a revelation of its own hidden wonders; or, in other terms, it contains more than can be discovered at the first glance. In this respect it at least resembles the works of God; for there, too, a correct understanding of their marvels demands an instructed mind, an opened vision. Without these, the words in which the poet described his rustic would apply to each :—

" A primrose by a river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more." ¹

Granted the opened eye, however, and suppose it further aided by microscopical appliances and skill in plant anatomy, and the primrose becomes a miracle of creative wisdom.

Indeed, the chief distinction between the works of God and those of man is, that whereas our productions, even the most perfect, display their best qualities upon the surface, the Divine handiwork, the more searchingly it is scrutinized, exhibits ever superior and deeper marvels. The watchmaker, for instance, fashions with minutest care wheels, springs, and pinions, adapted, when combined, to form an instrument almost emulating intelligent life in its ingenious usefulness. But the organization of his wheels and springs exists only on their surface. Break them, and nothing remains but formless rubbish. Take, however, the simplest work of

¹ Wordsworth, *Peter Bell*, Part i. ver. 12.

the Divine Artificer, the most unregarded insect, the commonest flower. You see at once that every outward part is immeasurably more delicate and perfect than in the watch, and that all are put together with an infinitely superior skill. But look below the surface : dissect the plant or insect ; apply your utmost magnifying powers ; test it with your most inquisitive analysis : the further you pursue your researches, the more you will find of wonder and beneficence.

More than this : without an opening of the eyes, the works of God in nature frequently mislead us. The sun seems to rise every morning in the east, to complete his circuit through the heavens, and at night to set in the west ; while, in reality, we know it is the earth alone that moves. The stars appear mere twinkling points of light ; whereas their vast majority are glorious suns, many of them immeasurably grander than our own. Not unfrequently, also, shaggy tracts of wilderness, frightful to the traveller, conceal mineral wealth that shall enrich unborn generations,—copper and iron that shall aid their labour ; gold and silver and precious stones to supply their money, and to serve for purposes of ornament and honour. Unlike man's work, therefore, which is always best and fairest on the surface, the productions of the Lord grow in perfectness and beauty the more deeply they are explored ; while, if scanned merely from without, they are very often never understood at all.

Apply this principle to the Divine Word. It is surely reasonable that the book which has God for its Author, should differ from the works of human literature, in the same manner as the objects which have Him for their Creator differ from the results of human handicraft. Consequently, we may expect to find in Scripture depths and heights of significance underlying and transcending the wisdom apparent on the surface, and constituting a complete and coherent Internal Sense. As within the material body there lives an immortal soul, so

within the literal Bible we ought to seek for a spiritual Word. Sometimes, indeed, taught by our experience of the sunrise and the other phenomena just adverted to, we are prepared to find statements which contain a meaning different to that received by the first apprehension,—assertions of truth, not as it is recognised by the instructed spiritual intelligence, but as it appears to the unregenerate natural mind. It was so with the Incarnate Word, when He tabernacled on earth. He seemed “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Isa. liii. 3), who had “not where to lay His head” (Matt. viii. 20). He was “the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father” (Isa. ix. 6). Thus, in relation to Scripture

“Analogy, man’s surest guide below,”

justifies, and indeed requires the prayer, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.”

But the conclusions of analogy, strong as they are, are the weakest link in the chain of reasoning by which we would establish the existence in the Word of a spiritual sense. The doctrine is continually asserted in Scripture itself, where our text, far from being an isolated passage, is one of a numerous class. Take, as an illustration, the apostle’s declaration,—“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. ii. 14). Of course the Divine Word contains “the things of the Spirit of God,” and these, the apostle says, the natural man cannot know. Yet most frequently the Bible seems to speak of matters easily within the intelligence of the natural man; since the greater part of its contents appears to relate to history or ceremonials, ethics or poetry,—subjects common enough in human literature. Whence we conclude, however, that these seemingly familiar topics, when employed in the Divine Word, must comprise more

than appears on the surface; in other words, that they contain interior truths which do need to be spiritually discerned. This is actually affirmed of almost every portion of Scripture. Thus we read concerning patriarchal times,—the history of Abraham and his two sons Isaac and Ishmael, with their mothers, Sarah and Hagar,—“which things are an allegory” (Gal. iv. 24). Again, it is written respecting the covenant of circumcision, “He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Rom. ii. 28, 29). The rock in Horeb is described as typifying the Saviour Himself: “They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (1 Cor. x. 4). In fact, the whole Jewish history, while undoubtedly literally true, is also affirmed to possess an interior or allegorical significance. For, in presenting a summarized chronicle of the Israelitish race, from the Exodus to the calling of David to the throne,—singularly simple in its unadorned narration of the leading incidents,—the Psalmist prefaces it by the declaration, “I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old” (Ps. lxxviii. 2). To a like effect, it is declared of the Jewish law that it had “a shadow of good things to come” (Heb. x. 1); thus enabling us to understand our Saviour’s words, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matt. v. 17). As to the outward observance of the Mosaic law, He unquestionably did destroy; wherefore, unless their real purpose was internal, and their real authority spiritual, the declaration has no meaning. Again, it is recorded, after His resurrection, “Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke xxiv. 45). If, however, Scripture contains nothing more than appears on the surface, whence this necessity?

From all which, we gather that the statement applied by our Lord on a particular occasion to one portion of His doctrine, refers also to every utterance of His truth: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John vi. 63). Or, in other language, it is an invariable rule that "without a parable" He never speaks to men (Matt. xiii. 34); consequently, that unless the "eyes" be opened, it is impossible to "behold wondrous things" out of His law.

And the reason is, because the parabolic is the only universal style of composition, the only method of expressing truth which is adapted to all orders of intelligence. A child may understand the simpler lessons of a well-constructed fable, while a sage may penetrate its hidden meaning. So a child can gather help and counsel from such stories as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan; whereas not the scribe best instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, nor even the highest angel, can ever exhaust the wisdom embosomed in these parables. Moreover, the child, as he grows in intelligence, will enter into their interior lessons as he becomes able to appreciate and use them; and thus will find the Scriptures, like the holy waters of the sanctuary (Ezek. xlvii. 1-5), a stream ever swelling in its volume, in proportion to his own capacity and needs. By virtue of its parabolic structure, therefore, the Word of God is adapted to reach and instruct all orders of intellect and character.

But further: the parabolic is the only style possible for a Divine revelation. Every book expresses its author's mind,—is that mind reduced into a legible form. But the Divine mind is infinite. Revealed as existing in itself, it would transcend all finite comprehension, and, dazzling by its excess of splendour, would confound instead of instructing those to whom it should appeal. Hence the wisdom of our Father in the heavens must present itself in a vesture which shall accommodate its brilliancy

to human feebleness. Its purely spiritual truths are, accordingly, veiled beneath a covering of appropriate and familiar imagery drawn from the natural creation ; wherefore, to reach the soul of the Word, and comprehend its Divine wisdom and intention, we must pierce this veil by the opening of our eyes, so as to behold the wondrous things of the Divine law.

But we shall be told that this is a dangerous doctrine, admitting of many ingenious sophistries, and favouring the substitution of mere human inventions in place of the commandments of God. Yet there is equal, or perhaps even greater danger in a rigidly literal interpretation of Scripture ; for history testifies that there is no crime so flagitious, no abuse so abominable, but that the letter of the Bible has been quoted in its defence. In the past this is verified by the records of persecution ; in our own times it receives illustration from the existence in America of polygamy, which is sustained by a perverted abuse of certain literal statements in the Old Testament.

We freely concede, however, that the doctrine of an internal sense in Scripture would be liable to enormous abuses, were not some system revealed, explaining the law of its inspiration, and thus defining the method for its interpretation. But to communicate such a system was precisely the chief mission of the Lord's servant, Emanuel Swedenborg, and its revelation, as seen last week, was so supremely important as to constitute the objective fulfilment of the Lord's Second Advent. What, then, we now proceed to inquire, is the law according to which the Divine Word is thus written ?

It is the Law of Correspondence, or of the relation which connects natural objects and effects in the material world with their spiritual causes in the world of spirit, and with their Divine origin in the Lord Himself. Of course all things exist from the Lord, both because they were made by Him at the first, and because they are continually preserved in being by His unceasing care. This is true even

of the lowest forms of life; of crystals hidden in the bosom of the earth; of the delicate tracery painted on our windows by the frost; of the insects and wild-flowers. All these live by energies poured into them from the one Supreme Source of Life. But how can Divine forces, intrinsically infinite in their omnipotence, dwell in the frail form—let us say—of a lily? Surely they would annihilate its tender weakness. We reply, because they are graciously accommodated to the recipient vessels in which they dwell; which can only be effected by their transmission through successive grades of being, each of which modifies the life it contains, and prepares it for reception in the degree next beneath. Thus the energies which lend beauty and fragrance to the lily, exist originally amidst the perfections of the Lord. From Him they descend, through properly adapted media, to the heavens; and there, perchance, animate some sweet fair grace, adorning the character of the angels. Through the heavens they pass into the minds of men, taking form there as some gentle affection or holy purpose. Through men they possibly descend into the animal creation, where, for aught we know, they prompt the lambs to gambol and the larks to sing. At length they find their last embodiment in the lily, which thus corresponds to the entire series of spiritual principles with which it is connected; so that, when our Lord says, "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow" (Matt. vi. 28), He not only encourages us with the thought of the Divine care for the flowers, but also teaches that His regard embraces all the tender metaphysical graces of which the flower is the material outbirth, and of which it consequently supplies a beautiful and appropriate emblem. And so it is with all things:—

"Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God."¹

We cannot find a better illustration of this Law of

¹ Mrs. Browning, *Aurora Leigh*, Book vii.

Correspondences than in the clouds; which represent that very letter of the Word of which we are now speaking. The clouds are, firstly, the reservoirs of rain. Now water is a type of truth, as appears from a comparison of their effects and uses. Thus truth cleanses the heart; for if clean at all, it is only through the Word the Lord has spoken (John xv. 3). Truth fertilizes the life; for nothing but instruction can make us fruitful in goodness. Truth quenches the mind's thirst for knowledge; in fact, whatever water accomplishes for the body, truth effects in relation to the soul. And the only source of such truth is the letter of God's Word; whence we read, "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass" (Deut. xxxii. 2). "For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. lv. 10, 11). The Lord's Word is contained within the letter of Scripture, which is thus the cloud whence we obtain this rain of heavenly doctrine.

But the clouds are not only the depositories of rain; they are also veils which beneficently moderate the light. And light, as every one can see, is a type of truth. In fact, this use of the word *see* testifies that light is truth; for it acknowledges that the mind, equally with the body, possesses sight, which can only be exercised in the light of truth. The Bible, therefore, as the depository of God's truth, must convey the Divine light to men. But how is the light of God to be communicated? We cannot gaze even on the material sun; its splendours are too dazzling and appalling—unless, let us add, as

veiled by the clouds. Consequently, the clouds represent that letter of the Word which similarly conceals, and thus reveals, the otherwise excessive radiance of the Divine truth. The clouds, also, though they appear in the sky, are formed of vapour drawn from the earth. Just so the letter of the Word is fashioned after a worldly pattern, and framed of worldly materials. It treats of the natural objects of this material globe, and abounds in allusions to the every-day experiences of those to whom it was first communicated. Moreover, the clouds are of an ever-varying density. Sometimes they veil the sky with the grey monotony of a dull, sunless day. Again they pile themselves together with the black menace of the storm. Anon, as the sun sets,

“The shifting clouds
Assembled gay, a richly gorgeous train,
In all their pomp attend his setting throne.”¹

At midnight, perchance, they enchant us by their silvery beauty, through which the moon rides supreme and calm. Or they may assume the gorgeous appearance described in one of the most magnificent passages of modern poetry,—

Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted ; here, serene pavilions, bright
In avenues disposed ; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars.”²

The clouds are, indeed, nature's loveliest, most perfect dissolving views. So, too, the letter of the Word assumes an ever-varying aspect, speaking here with the voice of imperative command, there in the tones of sweet entreaty ; in one place overwhelming the soul with terrific threats ; anon inviting us with loving promises

¹ Thomson, *The Seasons*—Summer.

² Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, Book ii.

and consolations ; now narrating history with the simple plainness of the merest chronicle ; sometimes, again, inspiring the imagination with a sublimity and pathos surpassing the loftiest strains of human poesy.

As with the blackest clouds, moreover, so the Word's sternest menace always admits some light. For, as our weak eyes cannot behold the sun unless a cloud or similarly obscuring medium intercept part of its brightness, so, not unfrequently, the letter of Scripture holds back a portion of its revelation, absorbing, as it were, the sweet truths that tell of the infinite love and compassion of the Lord, and permitting nothing to shine through but the practical commands to the wicked to repent and turn from their evil ways, which are thus always made clear even to the feeblest sight. In other places a reverse process is apparent : the literal veil of the Word, like the thinnest, most transparent clouds, opposes scarcely an obstruction to the Divine light,—

“ And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into heaven.”¹

In passages like the following, for instance, the spiritual sense shines through the very letter : “The Lord is good to all : and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Ps. cxlv. 9). “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matt. vii. 12). “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John xiv. 15). The New Church Writings compare the Word of God to a glorious human form, appropriately clothed, but with the hands and face uncovered. In the same manner, while the internal sense of Scripture is for the most part enveloped in the vesture of the letter, it still exhibits in places the unveiled light of the spirit, presenting, as it were, the face of Divine truth for the sake of expression, and leaving the hands free for the exercise of all needful power. And now,

¹ Thomas Moore, *Sacred Songs*, Number 1.

even the densest clouds of Scripture are being pierced by the Divine light, and the Lord is revealing Himself in every portion of His Word ; thus making the clouds His chariot (Ps. civ. 3), and fulfilling His promised coming "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30).

It is proper to mention that there are a few books in the Bible which do not possess the internal sense, and thus do not, in the fullest degree, constitute the Word of God. In the Old Testament these are—Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon ; and in the New Testament, the Acts and the Epistles. The New Church views these books in precisely the same light as the most reverent Christian commentators regard the whole of Scripture. Unquestionably they were all written under Divine inspiration, though of a different and more general kind than that which inspired the other writers of the Word ; and thus they are "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. iii. 16). It is not that we de-grade these, but that we immeasurably exalt the other, and by far the larger portion of the Bible. Because, in the light of the doctrine of the spiritual sense, all the difficulties in relation to Scripture utterly vanish. The Word of God is not given to teach us natural science. The Lord has written His revelation on that theme in the natural universe, which it is the province of the natural philosopher, not of the theologian, to interpret to the world. Neither is it presented to us as a treatise on history, or ethics, or on any subject which the instructed reason is able to discover. Its purpose transcends all these, since it is of a purely spiritual and eternal character. Moreover, being, as I have said, the Divine Mind itself in its lowest form, the sacred Scripture not only exists in this world, but also has its place among the angels, as the fountain of their highest wisdom. "For ever, O

Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89). Indeed, the Word is the means of conjunction between the angels and ourselves. What need we the puerilities of spiritism, with its grossly material apparatus of tables and rappings, and its other clumsy and dubious processes, when we possess this Divine revelation,—which, read by us in the letter, and perceived by the angels in the spirit, draws our minds into an intelligent accord with Heaven? May each one be able to exclaim, "O how love I Thy law! it is my meditation all the day!" (Ps. cxix. 97). May each offer up the prayer, and make its increasing realization one of the chief purposes of his life, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

The Lord's Second Coming an Accomplished Fact

A Lecture

BY THE

REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



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THE LORD'S SECOND COMING AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT.

"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory."—MARK xiii. 24-26.

LAST week, in considering the question, "Why was a New Church founded a hundred years ago?" we saw that a hundred years ago the former Church had become extinct, and that, consequently, the initiation of a New Church was absolutely necessary for the well-being of mankind. But the New Testament teaches that the Christian dispensation would continue until the period of the Lord's Second Advent; wherefore the fact that the first Christian Church is consummated, involves the further fact that the Lord has actually come again, and that our text and all similar predictions are already fulfilled. Now, strange and even extravagant as this statement may appear to those to whom it is not familiar, nothing less than this proposition do I hope to commend to your acceptance this evening.

But, it may be objected, do you really expect us to believe that the catastrophes affirmed in the text have positively taken place? That is precisely what it is my endeavour to show. Before doing this, however, let me ask whether we are quite sure that we know what is described in the text? Remember, the Jews thought they understood very clearly our Lord's doctrine respecting the Bread of life, when they raised their gross objection, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" (John vi. 52). Yet the Lord taught them, "It is the

spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (ver. 63). Again, when they were raising continual cavils and objections to His doctrine, He said to them, "Why do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word" (John viii. 43). Now we, if in bondage to the letter while negligent of the spirit pervading the Lord's Word, shall never understand His speech concerning His Second Advent. What, then, is the spiritual doctrine underlying all His sayings on this supreme theme?

It may help us in this inquiry to remember that very similar predictions were uttered respecting the Lord's First Advent. Thus we read, "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel ii. 30, 31). This is almost identical with the words of our text. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood!" Surely the like of this has never been fulfilled in this world! Yet the Apostle Peter, in the great discourse he preached on the day of Pentecost, declared, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts ii. 16); proceeding immediately to recite the language we have quoted, with other equally startling prophecies with which it stands connected. That prediction, therefore, had then already been fulfilled. But how? Certainly not literally. The sun and the moon were still dispensing their customary beneficent light. If a literal fulfilment was necessary to accomplish the prophecy, the Apostle Peter was either deceived or a deceiver. If, however, a spiritual fulfilment was then sufficient,—that is, if the sun and moon referred to by Joel and Peter represented certain spiritual equivalents to which the material orbs correspond,—we then say that a similar spiritual interpretation must be applied to

the almost identical predictions relating to the Second Coming.

This is also a necessary inference from our Lord's own words. For, "when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation : neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, lo there ! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke xvii. 20, 21). If the kingdom cometh not with observation, or outward show, then our text—which is Divinely and perfectly true—can only be true when understood as describing spiritual events, which lie beyond the ken of outward show. The sun and the moon, the stars and the clouds, of which it makes mention, cannot be those of the material universe, but the corresponding spiritual realities of which these are the types. And the more Scripture is examined, the more clearly this becomes manifest.

Thus we often find, in reading the Word, that the heavens and earth are named in an evidently spiritual sense. For instance : "I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth" (Isa. li. 16). Of course this cannot refer to the natural creation, whose heavens were planted and earth founded centuries before the prophet spoke. The heavens and the earth to which he refers can only mean the Church of the Lord, that grand system of Divine life and light existing in the hearts and minds of men, which is alone the proper subject of a Divine revelation. The Church is described under the twofold imagery of heavens and earth, because it is established both in the heavenly and the earthly regions of the soul. For the statement with which the inspired record commences, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1), not only asserts the origin of the material universe from the One Maker of all things,

but also relates to that initial endowment of capacity which every one of us receives from our Divine Father. As fashioned by Him "in the beginning," by our very constitution at birth, we all possess a heaven, or internal man; a region of desire and thought which is spiritual in its quality, where motive originates and principle reigns. And, in addition, we have an earth in the external mind, the natural degree of the soul, nearest to our speech and actions, which is more immediately concerned in the interests of time and sense and matter.

A knowledge of these symbolismes adds incalculable light to many statements of the Word. Take two illustrations. We read, "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's: but the earth hath He given to the children of men" (Ps. cxv. 16). No doubt we see a true and beautiful meaning in this declaration, when we raise our thoughts to the Lord's heavenly kingdom, and picture His love and wisdom reigning there supremely; while we behold on earth the evidence of human desolation and folly. But it also involves the psychological fact, that whereas the spiritual region, or heaven, of the mind lies to a great extent beyond the control of man, his external region, or earth, is always at his own disposal; the theatre where he must exercise his free will, and so regulate his speech and conduct that no corrupt desire nor wicked thought shall break through into his actual life to mar the Divine image and likeness there. Again, our Lord teaches in the Sermon on the Mount, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal" (Matt. vi. 19, 20). We see but half the meaning if we understand this simply as exhibiting the comparative superiority of our future interests when *measured* by our present state. How much of additional

value it acquires if we discern in it a warning not to deposit our mental treasure, the wisdom we gather from the Word, merely in the superficial lower region of the mind ; but to strive to make it the inmost concern of our hearts, a treasure laid up in the heavens of the soul, "where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth" (Luke xii. 33).

The Church, as previously intimated, has likewise its heaven and earth. Its heaven is constituted of the spiritual minds of men, and of the interior interests which fill them,—their convictions and consciences, with the principles, ends, and aims that make their life. Its earth, on the other hand, is composed of their natural minds, together with the words and actions in which they find expression, and the rituals, institutions, and outward professions whereby the Church becomes manifest and active. Hence there is a profound and intelligible truth in the statement, "I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth" (Isa. li. 16). For it is only in proportion as the Divine Word is received, and the Divine protection enjoyed, that the Church, whether in its inward or outward developments, can be maintained and flourish.

Nor does the spiritual heaven lack its "two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser to rule the night:" nor the stars (Gen. i. 16). The greater light, the sun, of course denotes Him who is "a sun and shield" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11), "the Sun of righteousness," risen "with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2). The Sun of the soul is our Lord Himself ; especially when regarded as to His Divine Love, and as the supreme object of human love. When He shines above the mental horizon it is spiritual day, when all is bright and warm and happy. But this state of interior exaltation cannot be uninterruptedly maintained. We turn from the

Divine Sun as the earth from its solar centre, and then it is night time with us. In such seasons, when we can no longer see the brightness of our Father's face, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. v. 7); for faith, like the silvery moon, cheers our darkness. The stars represent the knowledges of Divine Truth; every verse in Scripture resembling a glorious star, enlightening the mental firmament. All these symbols—sun, moon, and stars—combine in that sublime vision of the Apocalypse, "There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rev. xii. 1); in which we behold a type of the Church, begirt with the Divine love, firmly planted on the faith of an impregnable belief in the Word of God, and radiant with an intelligence of all needful spiritual knowledge.

In the light of these correspondences, we can understand the Biblical allusions to the destruction of heaven and earth, the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars; whereas, interpreted merely naturally, it is difficult, and indeed impossible, to explain them. It is hard to imagine, for example, that the Creator, the Father of all, who, from the abounding love that glowed in His Divine nature, made the universe as the nursery for heaven, could ever turn into the Destroyer of His own glorious work. If, however, the mere light of reason makes this belief difficult, it becomes absolutely incredible when we find it declared in Scripture that the natural universe will never be destroyed. Yet this is affirmed, over and over again, with an emphasis and clearness at least as strong as those which distinguish the apparently opposite predictions. Notice only a few of these declarations. "He built His sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which He hath established for ever" (Ps. lxxviii. 69). He "laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever" (*Ps. civ. 5*). "They that trust in the Lord shall be as

Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever" (Ps. cxxv. 1). Concerning the sun, moon, and stars, moreover, it is written, "He hath also stablished them for ever and ever; He hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Ps. cxlviii. 6); to which we may add the express assurance, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever" (Eccles. i. 4).

Thus the heavens and earth which are destroyed and renewed cannot be the visible firmament and the material globe, but the heavens and earth of the Church, its inward principles and its outward manifestations. Many such catastrophes have actually taken place in the past, wherefore we frequently read, not only that the heavens and earth will be destroyed hereafter, but that they have actually been destroyed already. For instance, "The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it" (Ps. lxxv. 3). "They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course" (Ps. lxxxii. 5). The 24th chapter of Isaiah is filled with such predictions, in which the earth is exhibited, over and over again, as in the last stages of destruction and decay. Thus, "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof" (ver. 1). "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away" (ver. 4). "The foundations of the earth do shake. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly" (vers. 18, 19). Such passages become intelligible when we remember that they were written in the corrupt days of those wicked kings of Judah and Israel, who "did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord," when, consequently, the Jewish Church was in a state of desolation. Similarly, at the time of the Incarnation the former religious system was passing away; wherefore the Apostle Paul

says, "Now all these things"—the calamities suffered by the Israelites as the result of their transgressions—"happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Cor. x. 11). Again, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews testifies, "Now once in the end of the world hath He"—Christ—"appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (ix. 26). In these, as in many similar passages, the Greek mentions, not the end of the world, but the consummation of the age or *eon*. This it was, as denoting the old Jewish Church, which passed away at the time of the Incarnation; and this, in relation to the dispensation which succeeded Judaism, has already become extinct, so far as concerns vital Christianity.

For there has been a complete fulfilment within the Christian Church of the prediction of the text, "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken." Literally understood, this is wholly inconsistent with the declaration concerning the sun and moon and stars of light, that "He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: He hath made a decree which shall not pass" (Ps. cxlviii. 3, 6). It is likewise physically inconceivable. The sun forms a mass a million and a half times larger than our earth; and a million, though easily pronounced, is a number which the imagination can scarcely realize. Yet the vast majority of stars are suns; many of them, as is well known, far grander than our own. It is simply impossible that these should fall crashing to the earth, and, as I have shown, it is quite unscriptural. But how eminently solemn and impressive the prophecy becomes when spiritually discerned! "The sun shall be darkened." Has not the sun of Divine beneficence and love been obscured in the Christian Church? When it has been taught for *ages* that "our Father in the heavens," of whom it is

red that "like as a father pitieth his children, so Lord pitieth them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13); and so far from limiting His goodness to them that fear, is "kind" even "unto the unthankful and to evil" (Luke vi. 35);—when it was proclaimed that the infliction of infinite penalty on an absolutely less victim, was not the Divine sun darkened? Or, when a great leader in the Church stated that causes thousands of little children—"not a span" is his expression—to burn eternally in hell for glory, was not the sun of heaven darkened? Or, to go to more recent times, when it was decreed that the infallibility was enthroned on earth in the person of a foolish, frail old man, was not the Divine sun darkened? Of course the consequence was that faith became extinct. The infidelities of modern times are in a measure traceable quite as much to the caricatures which have misrepresented the Supreme, as to the innate dullness of sinful humanity to believe in what is true. Formerly, the stars have fallen as often as heavenly knowledge has been turned into the tool of the proud and arrogant; as by those priests who employed their acquaintance with sacred Scripture simply to rivet more closely the chains wherewith they had bound the consciences of men. Thereby the stars were hurled from their firmament in the mind, and defiled by contact with the dust and mire of sensuality and sin. And, as a result, the stars that were in heaven were shaken; all the agencies which should have sweetened and spiritualized the mind and life growing feeble and decayed. Such was the state of religion about a hundred years ago; and, except as the Church has been renovated by new influences pouring in through heaven from the Lord, such is the condition now. Of a surety, except those days had been shortened, no flesh could have been saved (Gen. xxiv. 22). But those evil days were shortened.

Our necessity is ever the Lord's opportunity ; and, at the fitting time, the Son of man appeared as promised, "in the clouds, with great power and glory." How was this effected ?

Observe, firstly, the significance of this phrase, "Son of man." With one exception, to which I shall direct attention presently, it is the title always employed in Scripture in relation to the Second Advent. Sometimes, indeed, the name seems almost violently drawn into the narrative when this theme comes under consideration, as though any other term would be unsuitable for its discussion. We have an illustration in the speech of our Lord before the Sanhedrim. "The high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said : nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). Of course He meant Himself by both titles ; but in introducing the subject of His Second Coming, He seems to have been constrained to use, not the name "Son of God," to which He has just asserted His claim, but that of "Son of man." What are the grounds of this distinction ? What is meant by this title, "Son of man" ?

Not simply our Lord's human nature. This interpretation, though at first sight plausible, and one which is often advanced, is inconsistent with the declaration, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). Omnipresence is one of the attributes of the Son of man, and this can scarcely be affirmed of the mere human form, born of the Virgin Mary. The meaning of the name will be elucidated if we can attain a knowledge of the Divine idea of a man ; and we find this enunciated in the charge to the prophet, "*Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem,*

and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man" (Jer. v. 1). Why, the city swarmed with human beings. But then follows the definition "If there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth." Truth is the essence of manliness. He is the real man who is loyal to the truth; and Jesus was the Son of man because He was "the Truth." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John xviii. 37). He almost tells us in so many words that the name Son of man signifies His truth. When the people asked Him, "Who is this Son of man?" He replied, "Yet a little while is the light with you" (John xii. 34, 35). "Oh!" says the sceptic, "that is a mere evasion; no answer whatever to the question." If we read His replies with sufficient penetration, however, we shall find that the Lord always answers the questions put to Him. Thus, if truth be manliness and light be truth, His rejoinder to the people furnished an ample indication as to what constitutes the Son of man. Read side by side with this the description of the Son of man which opens the Book of Revelation: "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet. And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man" (Rev. i. 10, 12, 13). Why in the midst of the candlesticks? The inference is, as the source of their light, whose watchful care enabled them to dispense its radiance. Most significant, also, are the allusions to the phrase, Son of man, in connection with the Divine work of judgment: "As the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man" (John v. 26, 27). Compare this with our Lord's assurance, "If any man hear

My words, and believe not, I judge him not : for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 47, 48). Surely, if things that are equal to the same are equal to each other, the Son of man and the Word must be identical, since both are thus described as the judge.

The fact that the Son of man does actually mean the Lord as to His Divine truth, is established by the single exception to the employment of this name in connection with the Second Advent, to which I have already referred. It occurs in John's magnificent vision of our Lord's coming, where he says, "I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war;" of whom it is further testified, "His name is called The Word of God" (Rev. xix. 11, 13). Here we find a prophecy of the Second Advent which asserts that it will be a manifestation of the Word of God. We have already shown that the name Son of man, which in every other prediction of that Advent is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, also indicates the Word of God. Thus we reach this conclusion that the Second Advent, like the first, is a coming of the Lord as the Divine truth or Word. At His First Advent He came by actual incarnation: "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John i. 14). What is to be its second, fuller manifestation?

We are told in the text, and often elsewhere, "in the clouds." As, however, "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation" or outward show (Luke xvii. 20), this cannot mean in the clouds of the terrestrial atmosphere. Are there then other clouds mentioned in Scripture? It would appear so, since it is twice declared, "Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds"

(Ps. lvii. 10, cviii. 4). It is utterly unintelligible that the Lord's truth, a purely spiritual thing, should reach to the material clouds. We conclude, therefore, that these represent that to which the Divine truth does reach; that if we trace Divine truth to its lowest, most outward manifestation, beyond which it cannot go, there we shall find what is meant in Scripture by the clouds. What then is this lowest form of Divine truth? Surely, the letter of God's Word. His wisdom descends through all the heavens, and at length reveals itself, even to the natural intelligence of men, in the literal sense of the Bible. In my next lecture, on the Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture, I shall endeavour to show more fully what is meant by the clouds, and how the literal sense of the Word actually serves a use in relation to the Divine truth, exactly analogous to the function of the clouds in connection with light. Here, I can merely state the fact that the clouds represent the natural sense of Scripture; thus that the Son of man is said to come in the clouds, because the Second Coming of the Lord consists in the manifestation of His Divine truth in the letter of the Word, with a force and clearness never before enjoyed. He has actually come in this manner: with the "power" of mightier principles to establish His kingdom within the hearts and minds of men, and give them greater strength to resist wrong and to achieve right; with the "glory" of bright spiritual verities, which dispel ignorance and falsehood, and explain the seeming difficulties of the Bible, and illuminate the mind with clear intelligence. In the true and internal discernment of our text, therefore, it is already an accomplished fact that the sun has been darkened, the moon has not given her light, the stars of heaven have fallen, and the powers that are in heaven have been shaken; and that the "Son of man has come in the clouds with great power and glory."

But is it not declared in connection with our Lord's

Ascension, "This same Jesus, who is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven"? (Acts i. 11). How can the purely spiritual process just described constitute a coming "in like manner" as that in which the Lord went up into heaven? Here also, we must defer a complete answer until the lectures on "The Nature of Man," and "The Judgment." Meanwhile, however, let me point out that the narrative of the Ascension does not prove that the Second Advent of the Lord will be a bodily coming, visible in the natural world, for the simple reason that it does not describe the Ascension as a bodily departure, witnessed in this world. We read, "Two men stood by them in white apparel" (ver. 10). Who were these men? Obviously, angels. But angels are never seen with the eye of flesh. They are about us continually, "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14); encamping continually round about them that fear the Lord, and delivering them (Ps. xxxiv. 7). We never slander our best friends more grossly than when we say the angels' visits are "few and far between." But they need for their recognition an unsealing of the eyes of the spiritual body. So was it with our Lord after His resurrection. He was never seen unless the spiritual senses of those who beheld Him were opened; and it was thus that the Ascension was witnessed, since, without such opening, the angels there present would have remained invisible. And what the passage quoted (Acts i. 11) really proves is, that the Second Advent would be a coming, manifest and personal in the spiritual world, and also visible in this, to any who, in the order of Providence, might be prepared to see it by the opening of the spiritual sight.

Accordingly, the Lord actually did provide a qualified witness to communicate to the world every essential truth respecting His Second Coming. In this respect

He followed the course pursued by His Providence in the past. Every former dispensation was proclaimed through a human instrument. Abraham was God's messenger to his contemporaries. Moses was inspired to reveal the Divine will to his countrymen. John the Baptist came preaching the kingdom of God just prior to the Incarnation. Now in the same manner, when the time arrived for those "many things" to be spoken which the Lord was previously unable to tell, because the world could not bear them (John xvi. 12)—when the hour drew near that He should no longer speak in parables, but show His Church plainly of the Father (ver. 25)—the same process was employed, a similar agency commissioned. The person He thus selected as the instrument to communicate to the world the truths of His Second Coming, was the Swedish philosopher and theologian, Emanuel Swedenborg. This distinguished servant of the Lord was born on the 29th January 1688, the son of Jesper Svedberg, the Lutheran Bishop of West Gothland. From his childhood he was an ardent student of the natural sciences, and during his maturity a consummate master of nearly every branch of knowledge. He was a profound mathematician and an eminent anatomist, pursuing his researches into the structure of the human body with a view to discover the soul, which he found to lie beyond the scope of sensual investigation. But his desire for spiritual wisdom was abundantly satisfied. At the age of about fifty-five his internal sight was opened by a gradual process extending from 1743 to 1745, whereby he was prepared to see the wonders of the other world, and to receive into his understanding the truths which the Lord wished to communicate to men. Like the apostle, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts xxvi. 19). He at once renounced positions of political and social eminence, to devote himself, with absolute self-abnegation, to the new duties laid upon him. For nearly

thirty years he lived in conscious intercourse with the other world ; his position being similar in some respects to that of the seers and scribes by whom the Scriptures were written. There was, however, this difference. They were inspired to write the letter of the Word in such a form as to contain the spiritual sense, and thus to constitute the clouds through which the spiritual sense might shine. Hence it was not at all necessary that they should understand the full significance of all they wrote. But with Swedenborg the mind was enlightened to perceive the doctrines of the internal sense, that thus he might convey them to the world. For this purpose he was instructed by no angel or spirit, but by the Lord alone, while he was reading the Word ; so that the doctrines he proclaims are not his, but the Lord's. In fact he was the instrument of the Second Advent, in a sense analogous to that in which the Virgin Mary was the agent of the first. Then, that the Word might be made flesh by actual incarnation, the Lord employed the maternal function of a woman. At His Second Coming, when His approach was to be spiritually effected, by the fuller revelation of His Divine Truth, He used as the fitting agent the intellectual faculties of a man.

Besides being the medium through which the internal sense of Scripture was opened, Swedenborg was likewise a seer ; one who beheld the realities of the other world. Because mankind had lost all knowledge of that world, all faith in its actual existence. Indeed, at the present day—except so far as new influences have been poured into the minds and hearts of men—what is there of genuine belief on this supreme theme? Through the Divinely-appointed herald of the new age, however, this knowledge has been restored. For nearly thirty years he was the conscious denizen of both worlds, and his recorded experiences concerning the other life thus constitute a narrative of “things heard and seen.” By virtue of this intromission into the other world, more-

over, there was a fulfilment of the angel's prophecy, "This same Jesus, who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." For the Lord did thus come to the spiritual world to accomplish there that work of judgment, which was necessary to prepare for the dawning of the new light here; and Swedenborg was the witness of that Advent, and, in his works, the historian of its process and results.

Objectively, therefore, the Second Coming of the Lord is an accomplished fact; since, through the publications of Emanuel Swedenborg, the world has been placed in possession of that spiritual sense of the Word promised in the prophecy, "They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." But the principles thus revealed have yet to make their way into the hearts, minds, and lives of men. In one sense, the First Advent was completed as soon as the Babe was laid in the manger; but in its wider aspects it involved the bringing of the world to a knowledge of the truth, through the universal preaching of the gospel. So now, although the Second Advent is, objectively, an accomplished fact, subjectively its influences have scarcely begun to operate. Let every New Churchman strive to become its apostle. One and all, we should labour to learn and understand our heavenly doctrines; and, to this end, should "read often and meditate well on the Word of God," and on those God-given Writings which reveal its inner wisdom. Above all, we should let the light of the New Church shine in our actions, that men may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven (Matt. v. 16). Having freely received, we should freely give (Matt. x. 8), each dedicating himself to the Lord as His messenger, to communicate to the world those exalted truths which men could not receive while He was present with them in the flesh, but which, now that He approaches in the spiritual sense

of Scripture, they are able to bear ; that knowledge of the Father, no longer veiled in parable as when He taught by word of mouth, but expressed with the clear and rational demonstration which He then promised (John xvi. 12, 25), and which His merciful providence has at length supplied.

THE TRI-UNE GOD

*How to understand the Divine Trinity
without dividing the Divine Unity*

A Lecture

BY THE

REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



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THE TRI-UNE GOD :

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE DIVINE TRINITY WITHOUT DIVIDING THE DIVINE UNITY.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, Who is, and Who was, and Who is to come, the Almighty" (Rev i. 8).

FOREMOST among the subjects on which we naturally expect that the New Church, or new dispensation of life and light from on high, should shed fresh knowledge, is certainly that of the person and character of God. This is the very centre and foundation of religion, since "all people will walk every one in the name of his God" (Micah iv. 5). Nothing is more important, therefore, than that we should acknowledge the true God, and walk in His name alone. For, says our Saviour, "this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3).

Yet we find that from a very early period in its history Christendom receded from this knowledge, and that, at the present day, the greatest confusion exists in the religious world on this supreme subject. The Churches which preserve most inviolate the essential truth of the Divine Unity, too frequently do so at the cost of our Lord's Divinity; while those which acknowledge the Saviour Jesus Christ as God, too often declare Him simply the second of three Divine Persons, whom, nevertheless, they strive to make but one. And if we ask how this

can be, they have no better answer than that it is an inscrutable mystery, utterly transcending the powers of human comprehension. Yet the Lord teaches, "Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me" (Jer. ix. 24); while He affirms of all doctrine which is unintelligibly mysterious, that "when any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart" (Matt. xiii. 19).

Notwithstanding this obscurity on the subject of the Godhead, however, we find consolation in the fact that it was foretold in our Lord's prediction that previous to His Second Coming the sun should be darkened (Matt. xxiv. 29); whereby was signified, as seen in our previous lectures, the destruction of true knowledge concerning Himself, the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. iv. 2). At the same time, also, He assured the Church a fuller revelation in the promise, "The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (John xvi. 25). Consequently the chief article in the system of doctrine which it is the object of the present lectures to elucidate, is that which exhibits the Lord Jesus Christ, as Himself the only God of heaven and earth, who, in His one glorious person, comprises the entire Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, since "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 9, 10).

We find this truth expressed very emphatically in the text: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Who is it that makes this affirmation? Obviously the Lord Jesus Christ, of whom this book of the Apocalypse claims to be the revelation (*i. 1*). But the description manifestly includes the whole

of Deity. It is impossible to regard the Being thus presented to us as lower than the Supreme, or less than the Infinite. He styles Himself the "Alpha"—the first letter of the Greek alphabet—the "beginning," He "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty,"—evidently implying that He is the Creator, the Origin and Source of all, the one eternal and supreme God. But He also claims the epithets of the "Omega"—the last letter of the Greek alphabet—and of the "ending;" thus teaching that this same infinite First Cause of all things has made Himself manifest to natural apprehension, by bringing His ineffable perfections near to the least and lowest of His creatures. Thus the text exhibits the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the doctrine of the apostle, as "over all, God blessed for ever" (Rom. ix. 5), the supreme, sole Object of trust and of worship, whether on earth or in heaven.

Now the more the Scriptures are examined, the more evident becomes this truth. It is indicated in the identity of the name here claimed by the Lord, with that under which God revealed Himself to the Jews. When Moses received his commission at the burning bush, he said unto God, "Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM; and He said, Thus shall thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ex. iii. 13, 14). Again, "God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them (Ex. vi. 2, 3). Jehovah, the name thus claimed by the Deity, was the highest and sublimest of all Divine titles. Such was its sanctity that its common use was interdicted under pain of death, a Rabbinical tradition stating that it was

only uttered once a year, by the High Priest on the great day of Atonement. When, about the year 280 B.C., the scholars commissioned by Ptolemy Philadelphus prepared the Greek translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint, they exercised a similar reserve, substituting for the Hebrew "Jehovah" the Greek word for "Lord." Finally, the translators of our English Bible, influenced by a similar superstitious reverence, also used the word LORD, which, however, they printed in capital letters to show that its Hebrew equivalent was "Jehovah." The result of this unfortunate avoidance of the true term is that the genuine form, pronunciation, and significance of the name "Jehovah" are exceedingly doubtful, and that they have supplied a subject of nearly endless controversy. It is, however, acknowledged to be a compound of the Hebrew verb "to be," of which it is generally supposed practically to include the past, present, and future tenses, thus signifying Him who is, who was, and who is to come. So that the name Jehovah expresses the self-existence of the Infinite, His underived life, His inmost essential Godhead, His eternity. Yet the Lord Jesus Christ claimed this very name. For, standing in the midst of the reviling Jews, He testified to them, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). And afterwards, revealed in His risen Divine glory to the opened spiritual sight of John, He pronounced Himself the Being "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." Thus the text establishes the identity of our Lord with Him who styles Himself, in the Old Testament, "Jehovah,"¹ the first, and with the last" (Isa. xli. 4). "Thus saith Jehovah the King of Israel, and his redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God (Isa. xlv. 6).

¹ In this, and following texts quoted in the present lecture, we shall restore the more expressive name "Jehovah," in place of the substituted title "the LORD."

But the name Jehovah is necessarily limited to One Being. The attributes of eternity, infinity, and self-existence, which it especially expresses, cannot possibly be shared between two or more possessors, neither can they be communicated from one to another. Hence it is asserted, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah" (Deut. vi. 4)—a statement endorsed and intensified by our Saviour when He said, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark xii. 29). Since, therefore, Jesus is identified with Jehovah, He must be the only Jehovah; the same God who declared of old, "I am Jehovah: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another" (Isa. xlii. 8).

This is also the burden of prophecy from beginning to end. The great truth the prophets were inspired to reveal was this—that in fulness of time Jehovah Himself would come on earth as the Messiah, to seek and to save the lost. To quote one tithe of the evidence that might be adduced on this point would exhaust our time: we must content ourselves, therefore, with a very few examples. Thus we read, "Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you" (Isa. xxxv. 4)—a prophecy unquestionably Messianic in its character, twice declaring that God would come and save His people: wherefore, seeing that "the first of all the commandments" declares that "the Lord our God is one Lord" (Mark xii. 29), it must refer to that one God alone. Again, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him" (Isa. xl. 9, 10). "Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey:

and Jehovah saw it, and it displeased Him that there was no judgment. And He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto Him; and His righteousness it sustained Him" (Isa. lix. 15, 16). "I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore Mine own arm brought salvation unto Me; and My fury, it upheld Me." "He said, Surely they are My people, children that will not lie: so He was their Saviour. In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them." "Doubtless Thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer; Thy name is from everlasting" (Isa. lxiii. 5, 8, 9, 16). These are only a very few passages chosen almost at random, all declaring that Jehovah Himself would come to mankind as their Redeemer and Saviour.

But Jehovah, the infinite eternal God, is necessarily omnipresent. Unbounded by space, He yet fills all space; unconditioned by time, He lives through all time. How, then, can it be said of Him that He would come into the world? Was there ever a period, since the foundation of the earth, that it was orphaned of His care? Surely not. And yet, although Jehovah's hand was not shortened that it could not save, nor His ear heavy that it could not hear, nevertheless men's iniquity had separated between them and their God (Isa. lix. 1, 2). It is perfectly true that the sunshine of His presence had never ceased; but equally true that His light had been shining in darkness, and the darkness had comprehended it not (John i. 5). God was most certainly omnipresent, but He was nevertheless unperceived and unknown. Therefore He came into the world by making that unrecognised presence manifest. *Since the darkness comprehended not the light, the*

light assumed a form and nature that the darkness could comprehend ; and, when all we like sheep had gone astray, and turned every one unto his own way (Isa. liii. 6), the Good Shepherd Himself came into the wilderness, whither we had wandered, that He might seek and save the lost.

This manifestation of the Divine presence and character was effected by actual incarnation. The supreme miracle was accomplished, which was promised to the virgin in the annunciation of her approaching maternity by the angel Gabriel : "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee : therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God " (Luke i. 35). Through her agency a human form was provided, which was the Son of God, because it had no other father ; and thereby Jehovah, previously invisible and incomprehensible, was brought to view. So that while it is indeed true that "no man hath seen God at any time," it is also true that "the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him " (John i. 18) ; because, incarnated in the "Holy Thing" born of the virgin, Jehovah actually came into the world according to prediction.

Thus the Gospels record the fulfilment of that advent amongst men of their Creator and Sovereign which prophecy had promised. Nothing less is involved in the New Testament record. Consider, for example, the song of Zacharias : "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel ; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David ; as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, who have been since the world began " (Luke i. 68-70). The "holy prophets" had foretold that the Lord God of Israel would visit and redeem His people ; and Zacharias declared that He had done so.

Or ponder the significance of his allusion to "the

tender mercy of our God ; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (vers. 78, 79). The dayspring from on high, is of course the Divine Sun of heaven, the Lord God Himself. But how could we endure His presence when we cannot even gaze on the material sun ? Remember again the prophetic declaration, "Jehovah God is a sun and shield" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11). In Himself inaccessible, utterly intolerable to human weakness by reason of the excelling splendour of His brightness, He could still draw near us when shielded in the humanity, and instead of consuming us by the ardour of His infinitude, could become "the Sun of Righteousness, risen with healing in His wings" (Mal. iv. 2).

Again, it is written of the incidents which preceded the Nativity : "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. i. 22, 23 ; Isa. vii. 14). "God with us," indeed, for thus was born the Son of God, in whom Jehovah became manifest, and who was thus actually the Lord God of Israel come to visit and redeem His people. Do you object to the seeming paradox of a son who is declared identical with His own Father ? This, too, was anticipated in prophecy. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given : and the government shall be upon His shoulder : and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isa. ix. 6).

The more the life of our Saviour is examined, the more His identity with Jehovah is established. It is proved by His very name, Jesus, which was given to Him by command of the angel of the Lord, and for the reason that He should "save His people from their

sins" (Matt. i. 21). Of whom except God could it be affirmed that He should save His people? But further than this, we find Jehovah revealing Himself as absolutely the only Saviour. "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and beside Me there is no Saviour" (Isa. xliii. 10, 11). "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." "There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isa. xlv. 15, 21, 22). "I am Jehovah thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but Me: for there is no Saviour beside Me" (Hosea xiii. 4). Yet precisely similar language is applied to the Lord Jesus; for Peter, questioned by the Sanhedrim respecting his great discourse on the day of Pentecost, testified concerning Him, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). If then it was declared of old by Jehovah that except Himself there is no Saviour, while it states that Jesus received His name because He was the Saviour, and the apostle assures us that there is no other name whereby we must be saved, the inference is inevitable: Jehovah and Jesus are one and the same God; Jesus being Jehovah manifested in the flesh, that He might indeed become the Saviour of His people.

Or consider the evidence of the forerunner, John the Baptist. Three evangelists record that when our Lord was questioned as to the authority by which He preached and taught, He rejoined with the inquiry, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?" stating that if His questioners would answer, He would satisfy their demands (Matt. xxi. 23-27; Mark xi. 27-33; Luke xx. 1-8). In doing this He employed no mere ingenious gag to silence His opponents,

but appealed to them with an argument of which they well understood the force. For the chief priests and elders of the people were perfectly aware that the Jewish Scriptures had foretold that the Messiah should be preceded by the preaching of a herald. Isaiah had written: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God" (Isa. xl. 3). And the last of the prophets had been equally emphatic; "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me, . . . saith Jehovah of hosts" (Mal. iii. 1). "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Mal. iv. 5, 6). It was thus foretold that a herald preacher would appear who would announce the advent into the world of Jehovah Himself, and whose mission would be to prepare the way before Him. And John the Baptist was most clearly identified with this promised preacher. When his birth was promised to his father Zacharias, the angel had said, "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke i. 16, 17). And when he actually appeared preaching in the wilderness of Judea, he immediately asserted that he was indeed the long-expected subject of prophecy. For "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. . . . Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make*

straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias" (John i. 19, 20, 22, 23). And this same John, seeing Jesus coming unto him, said to his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me : for He was before me" (vers. 29, 30). Again he testified, "He must increase, but I must decrease. He that cometh from above is above all : he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth : He that cometh from heaven is above all" (John iii. 30, 31). A child may draw the inference. If the baptism of John was "of heaven," and he was indeed commissioned from on high, Jesus spoke with an authority no less than that of Jehovah God Himself, manifested in the flesh, before whom it was John's mission to prepare the way.

And Jesus Himself claims this identity. Even when on earth, while still "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (Isa. liii. 3), He said, "I and My Father are one" (John x. 30) ; and when His apostle asked Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," He answered him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself : but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (John xiv. 8-10). Can words be stronger? The Father was in the Son as the soul is in the body, and was the Author of the Son's activity, as the soul is the originator of the body's speech and actions. It is not often we can quote that extraordinary production, the Athanasian Creed, with approval, but where it says, "As the reasonable soul and flesh is one man : so God and man is one Christ," it speaks the very language of Divine Truth. Indeed, the human body is the son or offspring of the

soul. Edmund Spenser indulges no mere poetical speculation, but utters the simple fact when he says,—

“For of the soul the body form doth take,
For soul is form, and doth the body make.”¹

In the same manner, then, the humanity of Jesus, the body formed by the Father, was made by the Father His own visible person in the world. Thus Jehovah and Jesus were indeed one, because Jesus was Jehovah incarnate, manifest in the flesh, that He might redeem and save mankind.

But it will be objected, Our Lord speaks of proceeding from God ; He says that He was sent by the Father, and that He would return to the Father again. Remember, however, that we must not attach the same ideas to these terms in connection with the Lord, as if we were thinking of a merely finite man. As already shown, space is impossible to the Omnipresent ; and since space cannot be predicated of Him, neither can locomotion, which is simply movement from place to place within space. It was of this very subject, moreover, that the Lord declared to the apostles, “These things have I spoken to you in proverbs : but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father” (John xvi. 25) ; where the Greek word translated “proverbs” is the same as that elsewhere rendered “parable” (John x. 6) ; thus implying that all His utterances concerning His relations with the Father were parabolical in their nature. When, therefore, He speaks of “being sent from the Father,” and “proceeding from the Father,” He teaches that the Humanity was derived from the Divinity—that it was an outbirth from the Divinity, or a manifestation of the Divinity on a lower plane. Speech is in this sense sent from thought ; since it proceeds from thought, and exhibits thought in a more external region. Similarly a smile is sent from

¹ *Hymn in Honour of Beauty*, verse 19.

the affection that prompts it ; it manifests that affection, translated into an appropriate expression. And our Lord is said to have been sent by the Father, because through the Humanity the Deity descended into the plane of human consciousness, in order that man might thus be again enabled to know, love, and serve that God from whom he had become so far estranged.

But the Lord prayed to the Father, and declared the Father greater than Himself ; how could this be if they were both One ? Firstly, then, if the Lord was our example, He must needs have set us the pattern of prayer. But, secondly : although the Father and the Son are one person, they are yet distinct from one another. The soul and body constitute but one person, yet the soul is a very different thing from the body. And just as the body is inferior to the soul, so the Son—at least while the Lord was still in the world—was inferior to the Father. Indeed, such inferiority was necessary to the Divine purpose in the Incarnation. Without it the essential work of Redemption—concerning which we shall have to say more in our lecture on Salvation—would have been impossible. Redemption involved temptation ; wherefore our great High Priest “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. iv. 15). But this temptation was necessarily limited to His human nature : “For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man” (Jas. i. 13). Consequently during His temptation the Lord’s consciousness was confined to His Humanity, just as, in our trials, the lower nature often seems for a time separated from the higher. Thus David cries, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted in me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance” (Ps. xlii. 5). David and his soul were not two persons. So the apostle describes two laws,—the law of sin in his members, which warred against the law of God in which he delighted after the inward man ; ex-

claiming, in his distress of mind, "O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" (Rom. vii. 18-24). Paul experienced no division of his individuality, notwithstanding he expressed so strong a sense of double consciousness. Now our Lord Jesus Christ suffered a like collision, a separation of His lower maternal nature from His inmost Divine soul ; though in Him the contrast was immeasurably wider than in the extremest corresponding human case, and the resulting anguish infinitely more grievous. Accordingly, He too employed the language of prayer, pouring forth His agony of spirit in the cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). But when the trials of temptation and the cross were over, and the Lord arisen, the language of prayer entirely ceased, and instead of offering supplication, He is revealed to us as accepting the homage of His disciples upon earth (Matt. xxviii. 9 ; John xx. 28), and the adoring worship of all the hosts in heaven (Rev. v. 9-14).

Our Lord's temptations served a further purpose, which is intimated in the statement that the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings (Heb. ii. 10). This process constituted that glorification with the Father's own self, to which He alludes so earnestly (John xvii. 5). For the humanity which brought God near to us was to become His eternal person, so that for ever and ever He might be as accessible to men and as intelligible to their comprehensions, as during the few years of His visible presence upon earth. To this end His human nature was completely united with His Divine essence, and thereby became invested with every attribute of His Godhead. Hence the Lord declares, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18); an incredible statement if interpreted to mean the transfer of omnipotence from one Being to another, but full of significance and helpfulness when understood as teaching that from henceforth "in

Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9). And this essential work of perfecting the humanity was effected "through sufferings." In proportion as any tendency derived from the mother became the subject of temptation, and conquered therein, as invariably He did, its infirm elements were put away; and, Divine energies from the Father filling their place, the humanity became glorified, or united with the Father's own self.

This investiture of the Son with all the attributes of Deity is appropriately described in the language of inspiration as the ascension of Jesus into heaven, where He sat on the right hand of God (Mark xvi. 19). We are not to imagine that this implies the local presence of one Divine Being side by side with another. If so, we must suppose either that there are two Gods, or that Jesus is not God at all. As truly observed by Bishop Pearson: "By a general custom of the world the right hand is more used than the left, and by that general use acquireth a greater firmitude and strength, therefore the right hand of God signifieth the exceeding great and infinite power of God."¹ Hence the declaration that Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God signifies that all Divine functions are now administered through His glorified Humanity, which is thus inseparably one with the Father. Therein alone we can approach the Father, since Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life; and no man cometh unto the Father but by Him (John xiv. 6). "Through the veil, that is to say, His flesh," He hath consecrated for us a new and a living way whereby we have boldness to approach the holiest sanctuary of essential Deity (Heb. x. 19, 20). Through this same Humanity, again, we receive the Father's gifts, which, thus dispensed, assume a humanized quality adapted to our conditions, tempered according to our capacities.

The communication of such gifts is signified by the Holy Spirit, which is consequently represented as the

¹ *Exposition of the Creed* (Art. vi. ii. 3).

product of Glorification: "The Holy Ghost was not yet *given*; because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John vii. 39)—where the word "given" is printed in *italics* to show that it does not occur in the Greek original. Of course, there had existed from eternity the Spirit of Jehovah, but this was incommunicable in a direct manner to any finite creature. The Lord's Humanity alone could receive this Spirit; and to this it was indeed given without measure (John iii. 34), and when thus received, became fitted to the capacities of the entire human race. Hence, immediately after His resurrection, when the Glorification was accomplished, the Lord breathed on the disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (John xx. 22). Just as a man's life of speech and deed is the product of the combined operation of his soul and body, so the Lord's Holy Spirit results from the united activity of His Divinity and Humanity, and is their joint energies pouring forth to renew and sanctify and bless. The Holy Spirit is thus the Lord's own spiritual presence with His people; for "the Lord is that Spirit" (2 Cor. iii. 17). "I will pray the Father," He promised, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you" (John xiv. 16-18). Indeed, since the word translated "comfortless" is in the Greek "orphans" or "fatherless," we are here assured that where Jesus is, there also is our Father; for in Him, the Divine Humanity, the Father, or the Essential Divinity, abides, just as within the human body lives the soul. And as all our activity is through the body, so from the Divine Humanity alone proceeds God's Holy Spirit or Operative Energy, whereby His omnipotence is made available for the blessing of mankind.

Thus, in the one undivided person of the Lord and

Saviour Jesus exists the whole Divine Trinity. Therefore we adore Him as the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." But in Him the Divine perfections are no longer infinitely inaccessible and terrible in their dazzling brightness. They are brought near to us, and graciously adapted to our powers and needs. He is not alone the Alpha, but the Omega; not only the beginning, but the ending; not the first merely, but the last (ver. 17). Let none, in thinking of the person and character of God, grope in vague uncertainty, or tremble at the thought of inexorable justice, or of a purity too remote to stoop to our low estate; but let all behold their God in the Saviour Jesus. What He was on earth, compassionate, loving, helpful, such is He now and eternally in heaven. As near to us, as tender towards us, as to the disciples who enjoyed His presence; caring as much for us as for the sisters at Bethany, or for Lazarus whom He called from his four days' grave; as gentle to our sins as to the weeping Magdalene; as sympathizing in our griefs as in the sorrows of the Jewish ruler, whose little daughter lay dead upon her bed. He is even nearer to us than to them. He was with them, but He seeks to be in us. Therefore let us pray to Him, and to none but Him. For if in Him dwelleth all the "fulness of the Godhead bodily," and we are "complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. ii. 9, 10), to seek elsewhere than in Him is to go where there is no God at all. Of all Divine love He is the Alpha and the Omega; of all Divine wisdom the beginning and the ending; of all Divine beneficence and helpful strength the first and the last, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." And "to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (ver. 6).

y was a New Church Inaugurated a Hundred Years Ago?

A Lecture

BY THE

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JAMES SPEIRS

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WHY WAS A NEW CHURCH INAUGURATED A HUNDRED YEARS AGO?

“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed : and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”—DAN. ii. 44.



ABOUT a hundred years ago an advertisement appeared in the newspapers inviting the readers of the then new author, Emanuel Swedenborg, to meet at the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, on the evening of Thursday the 15th September 1783. In response to this summons only five gentlemen assembled, who at once began measures for disseminating the principles they had themselves learned to prize; and from that little meeting dates the beginning of the New Church in its visible form. Now, of course, there is no actual value in centennial observances. Intrinsically, the connection between the present year and the outward institution of the New Church is no closer than at any other time. Yet the natural mind feels an interest in such coincidences. We should be sorry to banish from domestic life our birthdays, and similar anniversaries; or to abolish the occasions which celebrate the chief events in the foundation of our religion, such as Christmas Day and Easter. Moreover, it is the part of prudence to use every opportunity which may lend an attraction to the truth we are sometimes so apt to overlook. Therefore, as the subjects of our usual winter lectures this centen-

nial year, we propose to examine some of the distinctive doctrines of the New Church which then took shape; and, by way of foundation, we shall this evening consider the question, "Why was a New Church inaugurated a hundred years ago?"

Preliminary to any discussion of this question, however, we should endeavour to obtain a clear idea as to what we mean by the New Church. Because, if the New Church is simply another sect added to the hundreds of Christian denominations already in existence, its formation would be a very doubtful benefit; since the sectarian spirit, continually quick to find reasons for differences and grounds for separation, has been among the most injurious influences to the cause of true religion. Yet it cannot be denied that to those who approach the New Church from without, it does seem to be merely another sect. They can scarcely be expected to perceive anything more in it than a new organization for the promotion of a different mode of worship from those existing elsewhere,—having its own ministry and distinctive institutions; and thus, apparently, forming but one more division among the host between which Christendom is distributed.

But the New Church claims to be far more than this. It professes to form part of a new dispensation, as different from the former as Christianity from Judaism. Regarded in its grandest, most universal aspect, the Church is the Lord's kingdom on earth. Thus the existence of the Church is indispensable. Without a Church of some kind or other the human race would be sundered from heaven, and, separated from its spiritual influences and from the Lord whose throne is in heaven, would inevitably perish; wherefore the Divine Providence always preserves a Church alive upon the earth.

Yet while in this sense constant and indefectible, the Church passes through various states, adapted to the *different genius* and requirements of successive genera-

tions of mankind. Of these states there have already existed four, each constituting a distinct age or dispensation in the providential government of the world. Now these four periods were represented by the four parts of the great image seen in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar: "This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. ii. 32, 33). Of course this description possesses the political allusion so evident in Daniel's interpretation (vers. 36-42), to the great empires of Babylon and Persia, of Greece and Rome; but it has also a spiritual reference, likewise shared by the prophet's explanation, to the Lord's Church, and to the various stages through which it has passed.

The "head of gold" recalls the Golden Age of which poets speak; which is described in Scripture in the divinely allegorical account of the happy condition of Adam in Paradise. For the name "Adam," literally signifying "man," was a generic term expressing the Most Ancient Church of God existing upon earth; which was celestial in its genius, because celestial love, or love to the Lord, formed the chief quality in the men by whom it was constituted. In course of ages, however, this Church fell. Preferring self to the Lord, and choosing to be led rather by sensuous human deductions than by His revealed will, it ultimately perished in the great spiritual catastrophe of which we read the inspired record under the figure of the Deluge.

A second Church succeeded, described in Nebuchadnezzar's dream by the breast and arms of silver; of which also faint traditions survive in the myth of the Silver Age. This Church, known as the Ancient Church, is represented in the Word by the history of Noah and his descendants. It was not characterized, like the former, by deep and exalted states of perceptive love, but by the affection for spiritual truth. In process of

time it lapsed into idolatry, and finally expired in the midst of divisions and dispersions, narrated in the Word under the type of the confusion of tongues at Babel.

Next came the "Brazen Age," describing the Hebrew Church, together with its later Mosaic developments; in which religion consisted primarily in the precise observance of a system of representative ritual, not possessing in itself any saving efficacy, but symbolizing with precise accuracy the true essentials of a Church, and thus constituting not only the basis of a Word that should serve for the instruction of all generations of mankind, but also providing a plane upon earth into which heavenly influences might descend from on high. But the Jews, as we know, made the Word of God of none effect by their traditions (Mark vii. 13), and in fulness of time rejected and crucified the Messiah; wherefore their dispensation was consummated and extinguished at the time of the Incarnation.

Then succeeded the period of the Christian Church represented in the vision by the parts of the image formed of iron, a symbol in Scripture for truth in the natural degree. Because the great characteristic of the Christian dispensation has been the natural and rational truth of the gospel, which was then preached and expounded. Since the beginning, therefore, four distinct Churches have existed upon earth, four ages, or *eons*; and the New Church, regarded under its broadest, most comprehensive aspect, claims to be a similar *eon*, equally distinct, equally comprehensive, equally universal.

Because Christianity, like Judaism, in course of ages fell. The nature of this decline is indicated in the description, "His feet part of iron and part of clay" (Dan. ii. 33); and more fully in the declarations, "And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; *but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron,*

forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (vers. 41-43). In other language, the strong keen truth of God's Word, represented by the iron, became mingled with the clay of mere human fiction and invention; hence incongruity was introduced into the Christian system, and together with inconsistency, the weakness inseparable from it. This adulteration of Christianity began very early in the Church's history; for even within the limits of the inspired canon we read of the defection of the Nicolaitanes, an early sect of heretics, of whose deeds and doctrine the Lord declared His hatred (Rev. ii. 6, 15). But the first great division to which it is here necessary to refer was the schism of Arius, who, in the beginning of the fourth century, denied the Divinity of the Saviour of mankind, teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ was merely a finite man. To refute this heresy, the Church gathered in council at Nicæa in Bithynia, and there, by way of an antidote to the Arian poison, invented the tri-personal dogma of the Trinity, dividing the Godhead into three distinct persons, each declared equal to the others, and to be by Himself Lord and God, the three yet constituting not three, but *one* God!—a figment of imagination utterly contrary both to the spirit and the letter of the Scriptures. Then followed the dreary period of the well-named Dark Ages, marked by the increasing aggressions of the papacy, and the growing assumptions of the priesthood, until the Church that should have been the shepherd of the flock, assumed aspects and functions as portentous and terrible as those of the Great Inquisition. In due course came the inevitable reaction. The

sixteenth century witnessed the great work of Reformation initiated by Martin Luther, whose four hundredth birthday Christendom is about to commemorate. Yet grand as his labours were, the iron was still mixed with miry clay. He wrested the Bible from the hands which for ages had closed it, and placed its open pages before the world. But unhappily he associated with his interpretations of Scripture the dogmas of Justification by Faith Alone, and of a Vicarious Atonement, depending, in the first place, on the substitution of a spotless victim in the place of wicked man, and secondly, on the imputation to the guilty sinner of the righteousness of the infinitely perfect Saviour. Thus we still find the clay mingling with the iron, and so weakening the Church's strength, and obscuring its brightness, that Christianity retained no power to arrest the decline continued through so many ages. Accordingly, the world reached at length that dreary eighteenth century, described by Carlyle, with characteristic vigour, as—"A century so opulent in accumulated falsities—sad opulence descending on it by inheritance, always at compound interest, and always largely increased by fresh acquirement on such immensity of **standing capital**—opulent in that bad way as never century before was! which had no longer the consciousness of being false, so false had it grown; and was so steeped in falsity, and impregnated with it to the very bone, that—in fact, the measure of the thing was full, and a French Revolution had to end it."¹ Such was the condition to which seventeen centuries of Christianity had brought the world! Wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, iniquity abundant, and love waxing cold, until faith was scarcely to be found on earth (Matt. xxiv. 6, 7, 12; Luke xviii. 8).

The evil inheritance of that bad age is conspicuous in the present condition of the religious world. Is it not

¹ *Frederick the Great*, Book I. chap. i. sec. 2.

notorious that over the greater part of Europe there scarcely exists a pretence of belief? Even in our own country and America, where for the most part a purer and more rational system of thought and worship has prevailed, the Churches are unable to solve the problems pressing on the consciences and hearts of men. How, for example, are we to think of the Lord Jesus Christ?—as a man, a myth, or as one of three Divine persons? These are the alternatives which the ordinary theologies of the day place before us. Or consider the state of opinion concerning the Word of God! What is the nature of its inspiration? Wherein consists its divinity? How shall we reconcile its earlier pages, and its frequent statement of supernatural occurrences, with the ascertained facts of physical science? Questions like these are undermining the faith of thousands; even religious teachers, in many instances, rapidly drifting into Deism, Agnosticism, and practical infidelity. What have the Churches to declare as to the essential difference between man and the lower animals? What is the human soul? or what its immortal destiny and future life? Worse than all, is it not wofully apparent that the Church is impotent to grapple with the crying evils of the world; and that it exists in the midst of a mass of worse than Gentile misery, ignorance, and vice, which grovel and riot in the very shadow of its temples, and the shame and peril of which it is powerless to remove? Verily, wicked in life and false in doctrine, Christendom has indeed realized our Lord's prophetic description of the state that would precede His coming: "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" (Matt. xxiv. 29). "The Lord God is a sun and shield" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11), in very truth the "Sun of the soul;" and has not He been darkened by the manifold false presentations of His character and providence? And, as the consequence, faith, which is spiritually the moon that enlightens our

night-time, when we are unable to walk by sight (2 Cor. v. 7), has been obscured. So, too, have the stars of heavenly knowledge been dragged in the mire of a false interpretation, and an employment to justify corrupt and selfish ends. Therefore the first reason why a New Church was inaugurated a hundred years ago, is, that a hundred years ago the former Church had become extinct in night.

But the Scriptures not only foretell that decline of the Christian dispensation, concerning which history is also so eloquent; they likewise promise the inauguration of a New Church by the Lord. For in connection with the great image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which typifies, as we have seen, the entire succession of the *cons*, it is also written, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. ii. 34, 35). Stone, in the Divine Word, is one of the most impressive and beautiful emblems of Divine Truth, regarded as to its strength and stability. We read of the Lord, "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth" (Deut. xxxii. 4); thus learning that He is a rock because He is the God of truth. For a similar reason, because he declared the truth concerning the Divine Humanity, the Apostle Simon received the name of *Petros*, the Rock-man: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church" (Matt. xvi. 18). Consequently, the stone "cut out without hands" denotes a system of truth not invented or discovered by man, but communicated by the Lord. By the stone smiting the feet of the image, which

were part of iron and part of clay, is signified that the former dispensation, being only provisional and introductory, would be superseded by the system of doctrine thus to be revealed from heaven; while the grandeur and perpetuity of the new age are indicated in the fact that the stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth; and also by the declaration of the text: "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

But these are not the only assertions which predict the establishment by the Lord of a permanently enduring Church. A like assurance is implied in His own language, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now;" and again, "These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs,—or, as the Greek word would be better rendered, "parables,"—"these things"—things, that is, concerning His relation with the Father, His coming forth from God, and His return to God—"have I spoken unto you in proverbs," or "parables," "but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs," or "parables," "but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (John xvi. 12, 25). It may be objected, Did He not do this when He opened the understandings of His disciples, that they might understand in the Scriptures the things concerning Himself (Luke xxiv. 27, 45); or on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended on the twelve? If so, it is surely strange that apostles endowed with this perfect knowledge should declare, "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12); or should testify, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). And yet stranger is it that the Church, if rejoicing in the light of

this fully manifested knowledge, should affirm of the Father that He is incomprehensible, and that faith in the verities of religion is an acceptance of that which violates the reason. Surely we are justified in concluding that orthodox Christianity presents no adequate fulfilment of our Lord's assurances, and that in its doctrines we shall look in vain for the clear revelation of the Father He has promised.

Again: Consider the mass of unfulfilled prophecies affirming the commencement of a new and brighter age. Listen to a few of them. "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4). With Europe standing under arms, as it perpetually does, has that prediction been fulfilled? "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. xi. 9). Is the earth yet full of the knowledge of the Lord? "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord" (Jer. xxxi. 33, 34). Or again: "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name One" (Zech. xiv. 9); with the similar declaration, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15). Do we yet see the light of this "good time coming," the realized glory of this promised day? In like manner we have the crowning prediction of the New Jerusalem, that holy city, "coming down from God out of heaven," concerning which it is declared, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,

and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 2, 3). Has the Golden City yet lighted, with its crystal splendours, in the hearts and minds of humanity? Of a certainty all these prophecies are as yet unfulfilled. Equally surely, however, they will be accomplished, for while "the grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, the word of our God shall stand for ever" (Isa. xl. 8). And, when they are fulfilled, then will a new dispensation have dawned upon the earth.

And that brings us to my third and last division, which is this: That those who, a hundred years ago, summoned the meeting which began the outward organization of the New Church, not only believed that the Christian dispensation had been closed, as was foretold in Scripture, and that a new era had been promised in the Word: further than this, they were convinced that the Lord had fulfilled His assurances; that He had revealed from Himself new principles, quick with a mightier life than had ever before gladdened the world; that He had actually come again, as He had said, "with power and great glory" (Matt. xxiv. 30); and that He was preparing the way, by His providence, for the reception of new life and light from Himself among mankind, so that He might make all things new (Rev. xxi. 5). In evidence of these convictions, they appealed to the Writings of Emanuel Swedenborg; wherein, as they assured the world, they had found a system of truth which he had neither invented nor discovered, but which had been revealed to him by the Lord alone. The doctrines there unfolded were no mere rules for the regulation of a little sect, but grand and majestic laws, defining the spirit and order of a universal and endless dispensation. For the questions so peculiarly characteristic of the present age have all been anticipated and answered in the Writings of the New Church. If you want a satisfactory solution of the problems concerning

inspiration, or evolution, or miracles, or those suggested by the connection between the spiritual and the material, you will find all there. Necessarily, those who received these principles united together, both that they might worship the Lord according to their conscience, and also in order to obtain the strength secured by combination in their endeavours to proclaim to the world the truths they had accepted. But they never pretended to *be* the new dispensation, or to include the whole of the New Church. Their province was to supply a knowledge of the renovated conditions that were produced by the fresh spiritual forces from on high pouring into the world;—to preach the gospel of our Saviour's Second Advent, so that men could intelligently co-operate with the Lord in the reception of the new light and life He was conferring upon them.

In this respect the efforts of our organization have not been wholly unsuccessful. In literature, in the pulpit, in conversation, we frequently find traces of New Church influence; indeed, it is not too much to assert that all contemporary movement of opinion which is not in the direction of doubt and denial is in marked harmony with New Church principles. Occasionally a book is written, a sermon preached, a speech spoken, which at once arrests attention by the freshness and vigour of its thought, and its sympathy with contemporary yearnings and perceptions, as if it had given utterance to inarticulate impulses stirring in a thousand hearts. These interpreters of the new forces and aspirations universally struggling for expression, always approximate to New Church standards,¹ not, necessarily, because they have drunk immediately from the stream of its teaching, but because, indirectly at least, they have imbibed some of the principles with which it is saturating modern

¹ A conspicuous illustration is afforded by the new volume of American sermons, *The Freedom of Faith*, by the Rev. Theo. T. Munger.

thought, and have found themselves prepared, by the pentecostal influences of the Divine providence upon their hearts and minds, to welcome and proclaim them. Thus the preachers of the new dispensation labour amidst a community which is growing more and more ripe for their ministrations. Like the Apostle of the Gentiles at Athens, they clearly know many matters seen as yet but dimly by the world at large, and can declare to their hearers, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you" (Acts xvii. 23). But progress has as yet been very slow. The errors of the consummated system are still dominant; and it is only when the image shall be broken, and the kingdoms consumed, that the stone can become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth (Dan. ii. 35, 44). Therefore the New Church has still, and will have for years, an important mission in the world; at once to declare the principles she holds, and to expose the unsoundness of the fallacies which war against her doctrines. The present course of lectures is one endeavour thus to hold up to the world what we most solemnly believe to be the light of Divine Truth. The spirit in which they are offered is that in which Moses addressed his Midianitish friend: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good" (Num. x. 29). May the Lord so bless both the spirit and the manner of our effort that we may find an abundant response,—“We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you” (Zech. viii. 23).

Heaven and Hell

A Lecture

BY THE

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HEAVEN AND HELL.

"Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy : for Thou re-
est to every man according to his work " (Ps. lxxii. 12).

THE subject of the Judgment, considered in
last lecture, naturally introduces the alterna-
lying beyond that crisis—Heaven, where
good will be happy for ever, and Hell, which is
appropriate abode of the evil and the lost. :
these conditions are equally the results of a man's wo-
they are the creation of his life, the outbirth and ex-
sion of his character. That is the doctrine of our i
"Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy : for T
renderest to every man according to his work."
present effort will be to show some of the fresh
shed on these most momentous final alternatives
the doctrines of the New Church.

Firstly, then, as regards Heaven, which we all lov
contemplate as our eternal home. To be a home, i
ever, Heaven must be a real, substantial world.
first impression, therefore, that I would urge
strongly upon every one is to divest the mind of
thought that Heaven is vague and shadowy, or tha
inhabitants are unimaginable, ghostly phantoms. Hea
be sure, is an actual world, glorious and intelligible
home of real men and women, complete in form,
endowed with every faculty.

The Word continually describes the angels as hur
Angels appeared to Abraham and Lot, to Manoa
his wife ; they are depicted in the prophecies of Eze

Daniel, and Zechariah ; they manifested their presence at the sepulchre of our Lord ; they are frequently mentioned in the crowning work of Scripture, the Apocalypse ; and in every instance they are represented as men. In fact, we are told that the measure of a man is the measure of an angel (Rev. xxi. 17), to teach the sublime truth that a man only reaches his true destiny, the standard for which he was created, when he exemplifies angelic graces. John was twice assured that the angels with whom he conversed had lived on earth, whence they had passed by death, and become beings so glorious that his first impressions regarded them as Divine (Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 9). The first doctrine of the New Church respecting the inhabitants of Heaven, therefore, is that all angels were once men or women, living on this or some other earth ; and that all good men and women, in the immortal life, become angels. In the words of a true though minor poet—

“ Alas ! we think not that we daily see,
About our hearths, angels that are to be,
Or may be, if they will, and we prepare
Their souls and ours to meet in happy air.”¹

In Heaven, then, the angels live active, intelligible lives, in a real, substantial world. Since they are no more self-existent than are men on earth, therefore, they require to sustain these lives by appropriate nourishment, and thus, like ourselves, they eat and drink. Scripture frequently asserts this fact. In reference to the manna it is stated, “ Man did eat angels’ food : He sent them meat to the full ” (Ps. lxxviii. 25). Our Lord, at the Last Supper, assured His disciples, “ I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father’s kingdom ” (Matt. xxvi. 29). He declared, “ Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ” (Luke xiv. 15) ; and again, “ I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My

¹ Leigh Hunt.

Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom" (Luke xxii. 29, 30). Indeed, Heaven itself is described as "the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Rev. xix. 9). Now we freely grant that the elements by which the life of the angels is sustained are not material: they must be the embodiment and vehicle of spiritual vigour; but they are none the less substantial on this account, but rather far more real and satisfying than the meats and drinks we enjoy on earth.

So, too, the Word contains frequent and most significant reference to the clothing of the angels. The young man at the Lord's sepulchre was "clothed in a long white garment" (Mark xvi. 5), and the two angels at the Ascension "in white apparel" (Acts i. 10). We read of the souls under the altar that "white robes were given unto every one of them" (Rev. vi. 11); while the "great multitude, which no man could number," were also "clothed with white robes" (Rev. vii. 9), which they had washed and made white "in the blood of the Lamb" (ver. 14). All these cases show that the angels possess clothing—the symbol, of course, of their interior states, typifying that "righteousness of saints" with which their raiment of fine linen is identified (Rev. xix. 8), and which alone is capable of being washed and made white "in the blood of the Lamb," or by means of that Divine truth or Word through which the soul becomes clean (John xv. 3).

Similarly, the angels dwell in houses. That great city, the holy Jerusalem, descended from God out of heaven (Rev. xxi. 10)—a prophetic type, it is true, of the Lord's New Church. Coming down "out of heaven," however, it has its antitype in the Jerusalem above (Gal. iv. 26), "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. xii. 22); and thus it reminds us that Heaven itself is likened to a city, which, unless it contained houses or dwellings, would be an inconceivable anomaly. Indeed, one of the sweetest promises con-

cerning the future life is our Lord's declaration, "In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you" (John xiv. 2).

In these heavenly mansions, then, the angels live their pure, happy home-life of domestic usefulness, peace, and joy. They are husbands and wives: for why should Heaven so frequently be likened in Scripture to a marriage, if nothing resembling marriage exists there? This, too, is surely our Lord's express doctrine: "They are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matt. xix. 6). Unless, however, "those whom God hath joined together on earth" are also spiritually united in Heaven, they are twain again; whence we infer the indissoluble nature of every true and Divinely consecrated marriage. You may object that on another occasion our Saviour taught that "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven" (Matt. xxii. 30); but this cannot contradict the truth which has just been affirmed. If it is a fact that those whom God hath joined together are no more twain, the Lord cannot mean to deny this when He says, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage." In this latter case He is speaking to the Sadducees of marriage in their gross sense, as expressed by the example of the woman linked in succession to seven brethren, which was a mere civil contract, entered into for worldly and temporal convenience. Of course there is no such marriage in Heaven, and let us thank God for it. The distinction to be noted is this: Is a marriage entered upon simply of man's choice and act, or is it of the Lord's appointment? In the latter case, those whom God hath joined together are no more divided; but as to the selfish connections of "the children of this world," the marryings and givings in marriage, arranged among themselves without regard to His order and Providence, there is nothing resembling

these in the Resurrection. Hereafter, if not here, the Lord's bountiful tenderness provides for every angel some congenial partner, in order that masculine intelligence and feminine affection, united in true wedded love, may present the best finite effigy of that infinite union of Divine wisdom with Divine love which forms the inmost essence of His own ineffable perfection. Thus marriage, rightly understood, is absolutely essential to all just conceptions of the excellence and bliss of Heaven.

In fact the Word teaches that Heaven is wonderfully like the earth, possessing, with certain limitations and qualifications, similar scenery, institutions, and activities, but inconceivably better, purer, and happier. Surely such a conception is likewise sanctioned by reason. Is not earth the training-school whither we are sent to prepare for eternal usefulness and joy? and is not some resemblance necessary between every training-place and the sphere for which it is designed to fit its scholars? The boy designed for mercantile pursuits is sent to a commercial school, where he may learn betimes the routine of the counting-house; the young soldier is drilled in some establishment where he may practise the discipline of the barracks; the young sailor acquires, on mimic masts and spars, skill which will enable him to brave the dangers of the deep. So it is with us: our eternal home will be no utter departure from our present experiences. The employments, the associations, and delights that engage us here, are all intended to fit us for the nobler activities and purer felicities in which we shall take part there. Thus Heaven will not be strange to us; it will be familiar and homelike, but glorified and transcendently happy.

Moreover, all the outward characteristics of Heaven depend upon the inward qualities of those who dwell there. "The kingdom of God," our Lord teaches, "is within you" (Luke xvii. 21); and it is the kingdom of

God within the angels that determines the nature and variety of the excellences and delights around them. The brightness of an angel's intelligence glorifies his light; the fervour of his affections warms him with heavenly heat; his gladness gives a brilliancy and splendour to everything around him; the sphere and circumstances round every one correspond completely to the desires and thoughts that dwell within him. View this conception of Heaven in connection with the diversity of angelic excellence. Remember, all the good men and women who ever lived upon earth, whatsoever the characteristic peculiarities by which they were distinguished, are congregated there, and retain every taste and specific ability for which they were eminent while here. There, for instance, are gathered together philosophers like Plato and Confucius; artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo; poets like Shakespeare, Milton, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning; the magicians of song, the Handels, Beethovens, and Mendelssohns; philanthropists whose hearts have beat and hands toiled in the interests of their fellows, like John Howard and William Wilberforce; and those, such as Watt and Stephenson, who, by their practical usefulness, have enlarged the circle of human capacity and welfare. All these, so far as they added to their inherent genius and active achievements the graces of devotion to the Divine will and of a regenerated nature, are living there, and retain whatsoever constituted their characteristic excellences here. To be suited to all, therefore, Heaven can be no great uniform or undiversified condition; it must be a theatre of varied blessings, adapted to requirements and faculties of the most different characters. That it actually is so, is taught in Scripture; where we rarely read in the original Hebrew and Greek of Heaven in the singular, but almost always of the Heavens. A striking example of this is afforded in the Lord's Prayer, which is not addressed, as in the current

inaccurate version, to "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. vi. 9), but, rightly translated, to "Our Father who art in the heavens." For the Heavens are multifariously diversified, to suit the characters and requirements of those who dwell there, and throughout the whole our Father lives and reigns, and fills their spheres with blessing.

In obedience to the law which prescribes a universal trinity, the grandest division of the Heaven is threefold. The human mind is organized into three degrees, called respectively the natural, spiritual, and celestial, and these constitute the bases of the three Heavens. Every man is born natural. If he obeys the Divine laws from a principle of duty, he becomes a good man on the natural plane, and, leaving the world in this condition, he enters the first or natural Heaven. If, however, he rises above mere obedience into a condition of intelligent love of the truth for its own pure sake, he opens within himself the spiritual degree, and, passing hence in that state, is an angel of the second or spiritual Heaven. If, here upon the earth, he attains that highest pinnacle of excellence which loves goodness supremely, and values truth only as the indispensable means for attaining goodness—immediately converting every knowledge, by practice, into goodness—then is he a celestial man, and, dying of this quality, is raised into the third or celestial Heaven. It is no new idea that there are three Heavens. St. Paul refers to it when he says, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago"—it is understood that he is here speaking of himself—" (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven" (2 Cor. xii. 2). The apostle thus testifies to the fact that there are at least three Heavens. Each Heaven, again, is further subdivided into societies, referred to by our Lord as the "many mansions" into which He describes the Father's house as distinguished (John xiv. 2).

So that for every one there some place is found among those of congenial disposition. No imperfect sympathies, no incompatibilities, such as here too often mar the intercourse, even of the good, can interfere with the perfect peace. The law of spiritual affinity, which arranges all according to the sympathies of the soul, determines the place of each. Hence our answer to the oft-repeated question, Shall we know each other there? Why, surely. Those whom genuine love unites, death cannot sever. In the spiritual world thought is presence, wish is conjunction. There, consequently, is the meeting-place of those whom here the grave has parted. Husband and wife sundered in tears, the mother snatched from her children, or the little child torn from the bleeding heart of the mother, will there clasp each other once again, and fear no further pain of separation. Not one necessary to happiness will then be absent, nor will any whose presence could disturb be near; but, each in his own proper mansion, associated with all who can help, surrounded by scenes and circumstances harmonious with his inward quality, will inhabit a Heaven around him, the reflection of the Heaven which lives within.

What are the causes and constituents of the Heaven thus centred in the angels? Sir Walter Scott indicates the first and chief, in his well-known line—

“Love is heaven, and heaven is love.”¹

Even earth is heavenly in the measure of its love, and Heaven is Heaven because there each strives to make all the others happy. Thus myriads of myriads of glorious mighty beings combine their energies to bless every soul. The only reward an angel seeks is the opportunity to render further benefits. Love, there, is the inmost, supreme life.

Wisdom is the glorious light that accompanies this

¹ *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Canto III., ii.

love. There, will be fulfilled in completeness the Divine promise concerning the Comforter: "He will guide you into all truth" (John xvi. 13). There, also, the apostle's aspiration will be realized: "Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). The dark places of Scripture will then be explained. "For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven" (Ps. cxix. 89). It is the fountain of intelligence to the angels; and one source of their delight is doubtless to fathom the profundities of wisdom which it embosoms. The mysteries of Providence will then be vindicated. The wonderful ties that connect mind with matter, cause with effect, will then be explained. There we shall enjoy an acquaintance with the Divine: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land of far distances" (Isa. xxxiii. 17)—not, as our version says, "the land that is very far off," but the land where every vista opens up sublime possibilities of knowledge and achievements, offering exhaustless fields of research and performance to the striving inquiring soul.

In Heaven there is also the perfection of strength. The angels each possess a spiritual body, complete in every organ and faculty, and which is itself an effigy of the inward graces by which it is animated. Swedenborg warms almost into the language of poetry, when describing some of the simple realities of Heaven. "They who are in Heaven are continually advancing to the spring-time of life, and the more thousands of years they live, the more delightful and happy is the spring to which they attain; and this progression goes on to eternity, with an increase according to the progressions and degrees of their love, charity, and faith . . . In a word, to grow old in Heaven is to grow young."¹ With such a spiritual body to effect the behests of their minds, they

¹ *Heaven and Hell*, 414.

are able to carry out whatever love desires or wisdom plans.

In the use, then, of the powers they so richly possess, the angels find their happiness. Not in ceaseless worship, nor in endless converse with the great and good. Far nobler is the conception of angelic activity expressed by the Laureate :

“Doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit,
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.”¹

Whether in Heaven or on earth, it is impossible to imagine happiness apart from activity. Bandage the eyes, and they darken into blindness. Muffle the ears, and they become deaf. Chain the hands and feet, and all power to feel and move gradually expires. Work, rightly understood, is our choicest blessing. It is the distinguishing characteristic of truly human excellence, for the best man is he who best does the best work. Work is Divine ; for, says our Lord, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John v. 17). In Heaven, however, work never degenerates, as it often does on earth, into grinding sordid toil, nor is it ever unsuited to the worker. It is, moreover, immeasurably exalted in its character. Sometimes those who misrepresent the New Church absurdly caricature our doctrine, as teaching that a man follows the same employment there that he pursued on earth. How far such a perversion is from the truth, however, will sufficiently appear from this one consideration, that, whereas the bulk of businesses on earth have for their object to supply the body’s want of food, clothing, or dwelling, in Heaven all such necessities of life are freely granted by the Lord. The angels never need to work merely that they may live : they live in order that they may freely and gloriously work.

Thus their employments are purely spiritual, so that

¹ Tennyson : *In Memoriam*, xxxix.

we can only enter into a most general idea of their quality. One important field for their activity is, doubtless, suggested by the question, "Are they not all ministering spirits?" (Heb. i. 14). "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Ps. xxxiv. 7). When Elisha and his servant were in sorest peril, the enemy around and no human help at hand, the prophet declared, "They that be with us are more than they that be with them" (2 Kings vi. 16), and when the servant's eyes were opened, he saw a heavenly phalanx arrayed in their defence. It is so always. We are never left alone in our trials. Our dear ones gone before us are neither forgetful nor absent. The mother there may tenderly watch over her son here, in all his temptations and wayward wanderings. Death cannot kill goodness, slay love, or quench the desire to help. It does but liberate these energies from the imperfections that here circumscribe their power.

"Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth :
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere."¹

It is wrong to sing of the "happy land" as "far, far away," or to slander the "angels' visits" as "few and far between." They never leave us, but when we drive them away by our own sin and folly : they are ever near us, ever loving, ever thoughtful and helpful.

Consider, further, the perfection of heavenly work. Here, how circumscribed are all our efforts! What painter ever put upon canvas the forms or colours that shine before his spirit's eye? What musician ever reached the height of sublimity, or melted to the tenderness of the strains, ringing in his spirit's ear? What poet ever found words burning enough to express his breathing thoughts? Or what philanthropist,

¹ Tennyson : *In Memoriam*, lxxxii.

embracing in the arms of his love the sorrowing or sinful among his brethren, was ever able to accomplish schemes that reached the height of his noble aims? Here, every one is like a tethered bird, bound by the limits of flesh and time. But there, performance goes hand in hand with design and thought and aspiration; and in free, mighty, triumphant work consists the very essence of heavenly happiness.

Yet forget not that Heaven is rest. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. xiv. 13). There is, however, a distinction between work and labour. Labour is work done in spite of obstacles and weariness. Now no impediments or fatigue can hamper work in Heaven; no conflict can arise there between desire and knowledge. Every one has reached the condition described by our Lord: "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). They are free, not only in the negative sense that they experience no let or hindrance, but positively, in that they are at perfect liberty to carry out their sanctified intentions. "Their works do follow them:" they indulge to the uttermost the activities in which their hearts delight. But "they rest from their labours," because obstacles and weariness are passed away for ever.

Add to all this that Heaven is a state of eternal progress. It is literally for ever increasing in numbers, new inmates continually pouring in from the universe of worlds; so that, "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end" (Isa. ix. 7). Similarly, the perfection and blessing of each separate angel ceaselessly advance. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). In the remotest conceivable future, something infinitely brighter lies beyond, quickening the aspirations, nerving the endeavours of every one. Such

is a sketch, in merest outline and faintest, dimmest hues, of Heaven, our home.

It is almost a misfortune, in lecturing on Heaven and Hell, that a sense of propriety compels us to consider Heaven first; because we must now turn from the contemplation of what is so purely delightful, to the dark, sad opposite. Rightly to understand Hell we must regard it as in all respects the reverse of Heaven, since the same laws which render Heaven bright and happy, of necessity produce there a complete contrast. The evil and falsity, loved and cherished by the lost, deform their spiritual bodies until each becomes a monster of ugliness; they deface the landscape and befoul their dwellings and clothing; they produce all around them circumstances of desolation and misery.

Why, it may be asked, if God is love, does such a state exist? It is because God is love that this condition is permitted. Recall the language of the text: "Unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest to every man according to his work." This is manifest in the case of the regenerate. "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. xxv. 23). Their works have prepared them for this joy. But would the same conditions make the wicked happy? Their works have alienated them from the Divine presence; they have distorted the very organization of the soul. How could they participate in "the joy of their Lord"? There are on earth foul carrion creatures—vultures and crows that feed upon corruption, hyenas and jackals that prey upon the dead, insects which find their delight in pestilential filth. Place such vermin in the midst of fragrant purity: are they happy? With eager haste they would return to their cherished garbage. Again: foolish men and women sometimes habituate themselves to the use of poisons—opium, or morphia, or even, in extreme

cases, because it lends a transient bloom to the complexion and roundness to the features, arsenic. The retribution which awaits them is this: the drug, to secure its desired effect, must be taken in ever increasing quantities—as De Quincey, beginning with drops of laudanum, at length kept a decanter of the deadly fluid constantly at hand—until the body, grown not only tolerant of poison, but hungry for it, becomes incapable of assimilating purely healthful food. This is a perfect illustration of the consequence of persistent evil. Surely, one of our highest ideals of blessing is to be like the Lord Jesus Christ, to receive His life, to share His presence. Yet, when He began to teach in the synagogue at Capernaum, a grovelling demoniac fell prostrate before Him, crying, “Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God” (Luke iv. 34). We are taught that “a thousand enemies in the hells are not able to sustain one ray of the light of heaven.”¹ There is a conception of Hell! A thousand fiends shrinking in horror—from what? A beam of heavenly light! They are spared such anguish because the Lord, in mercy, renders “to every man according to his work.”

They are not, however, exempt from misery on that account. Wherever sin exists, misery attends as its inseparable companion. “Evil shall slay the wicked” (Ps. xxxiv. 21); but not because God dooms them to destruction. He loves, and would save, the very worst. “The Lord is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works” (Ps. cxlv. 9). “He is kind unto the unthankful and the evil” (Luke vi. 35). He casts no one into Hell. What the lost are they have made themselves; suicides, every one of them, self-elected to spiritual death, self-sentenced to their own place.

The nature of this place is exhibited in the most

¹ Swedenborg: *Heaven and Hell*, 137.

sombre, saddest colours. It is the realm "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 44), a passage quoted by our Lord from ancient prophecy (Isaiah lxvi. 24). The allusion, as is well known, is to the valley of Hinnom, south-west from Jerusalem, the place desecrated to the rites of Molech, where the sovereigns and nobility of Judah had made their sons and daughters pass through the fire. To render it of perpetual evil repute, therefore, the good king Josiah burned there the carcases of criminals and unclean beasts, and made it a scene of corruption and dishonour (2 Kings xxiii. 10). Why should it be cited, however, in relation to the final lot of the wicked? Of course the sorrows it typifies cannot be material. The infernals, like the angels, live in spiritual bodies, subject only to spiritual influences. What, then, are the causes of their undoubted pain?

First we read of fire. Now fire, in Scripture, is a type of love, the vital flame of life. We acknowledge this symbolism when we speak of a warm heart, a hot temper, a chilling reserve, and in a thousand familiar expressions. Hence the Word attributes fire to every degree of life—Divine, angelic, human, and diabolical. The Lord is Himself "a consuming fire" (Deut. iv. 24); because His infinite love, as it exists in its essential, unmodified ardour, would overwhelm and destroy whatsoever is incompatible with its own purity. He "maketh His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire" (Ps. civ. 4); because His celestial ones are forms and embodiments of love. A fire was ever to be burning on the altar (Lev. vi. 13) of the representative people, to denote the need for perpetually maintaining the fire of pure affection on the altar of the heart. Ofttimes, however, love is perverted; wherefore fire also typifies evil desires. "Wickedness burneth as the fire" (Isa. ix. 18), and is indeed the very fire of Hell—self-love, scorching and desolating everything pure and beautiful and true. All

there, remember, are of the same quality ; a community of sensualists, robbers, and murderers, burning insatiably with hatred, and covetous of everything possessed by others. Manifestly, they must constitute a den of mutual and self-tormentors.

Notwithstanding its fire, however, Hell is represented as a scene of darkness,—the “outer darkness,” where shall be “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. xxv. 30). This darkness betokens the falsehood of the lost, their utter aversion to truth, and consequent rejection of the light of knowledge. The “gnashing of teeth” symbolizes the grating discords attending such a state : the sensuous reasonings of those who hate all pure intelligence, their endless disputations and clamours and slanders. The undying worm (Mark ix. 44) is the incessant torment arising from this falsehood—not, as sometimes imagined, the pangs of conscience or stings of remorse. For in Hell there is no true sorrow for the past. A single emotion of genuine grief for the mis-spent life on earth would unbar the dungeons of darkness and open the gates of Heaven. Hell is Hell just because its subjects will not feel such a sorrow. They glory in their wicked past, and only seek how to continue its corruptions. Accordingly, the “worm” is their constant self-deception, their vain hopes which always end in failure, their intellectual skill degraded into cunning, which is for ever foiled. Thus Hell is a scene of hate, deceit, and folly.

Hence direful penalties are necessary there, yet no one suffers for sins committed on the earth. To suppose that the Lord inflicts an eternity of torture for transgressions done in time is horrible. Do you sustain such a notion on the plea of justice? It would be the extreme of barbarous injustice. Justice is that which sets wrong things right. It has no sympathy or necessary connection with pain. Pain is itself an evil, thus intrinsically hateful to justice, and never permitted by justice,

except for the sake of some good not otherwise to be attained. How, then, does all this apply to the lot of those who exist in Hell?

Truly, none suffer there for the sins wrought on earth. In the resurrection the worst, equally with the best, are welcomed by the angels. But they return to their old loves; they seek to continue their former lives, to perpetrate their familiar transgressions. All, there, are of this quality, the hand of every one against each, and their only possible restraint, fear. Severe pains are, therefore, permitted in the interest of the lost themselves. These are never inflicted by the Lord, however, but always by each other; while angels are present to mitigate the fury of the avenging ones, lest it should pass the appointed limit. Hell is thus a state of ceaseless wrong desire, which, whenever indulged, brings swift, terrible, and certain retribution.

Yet the wicked are happier there than they would be in Heaven. The difference between a fiend and an angel is essential, deep, and organic. Their lives are the opposite, the inversions of each other. An angel's joy would be a fiend's torment. Consider well this fact, and it follows that Hell is, of necessity, eternal. There, by his own determination, the unjust is unjust still, and the filthy filthy still, as surely as the righteous is righteous still, and the holy holy still (Rev. xxii. 11). A devil in the hells is not an undeveloped angel: he is the very opposite of an angel, hating and dreading all that the angel trusts and loves. Thus he has no inducement to reform. Besides, the conditions which here render reform possible, no longer exist there. Here the will and the understanding are separate: we can learn to do truth although we do not love it; thus we can change our mode of life, and progress from evil to goodness, and from what is good to what is better. There, however, the will and the understanding form a one. The inhabitants of Hell cannot possibly obey or even per-

ceive, with permanence, any truth which conflicts with their heart's desire, hence they cannot profit by instruction. Nor have they the wish to profit. They own no love for goodness, no interest in truth, no delight but in evil, no fear but of pain. The question is not, Is God willing to save them? He is eternally willing. The question is, Are they able to receive His saving grace? And we are compelled to acknowledge the truth so often and so emphatically affirmed in Scripture, that evil is of eternal consequence, that the present life is a real probation, that hereafter the great gulf will be fixed (Luke xvi. 26).

Therefore, let us regard our daily works as most solemn. Unconsciously, gradually, but with inevitable certainty, they are already preparing our eternal future. They are already determining in what manner, hereafter, the mercy of our Lord will render *unto us* according to our works. Think of Hell, not from without, as a hideous jail—think of it from within, as the natural consequence and sure product of wickedness. “The way of transgressors is hard” (Prov. xiii. 15). “Evil shall hunt the violent man to overthrow him” (Ps. cxi. 11). The wicked need no other executioner. Do not suppose they would be happy, if only they could press into Heaven: they would make Heaven itself a Hell. Fear not Hell, therefore, but the disorder and sin that make Hell. “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil” (Ps. xcvi. 10). Remember, Heaven is “the joy of our Lord.” The only way to prepare for it, therefore, is to make His joy ours. It is not ours by nature; wherefore He warns us, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John iii. 3). As a fit conclusion, then, to this course of lectures—as the last solemn words to be uttered on this last Sunday of another year—hear, I beseech you, the alternative placed before the Israelites, on the eve of their entrance into the Promised Land: “I call heaven

and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing : therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live : that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him : for He is thy life, and the length of thy days : that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them " (Deut. xxx. 19, 20).

The Judgment :

When, Where, and How is Man Judged ?

A Lecture

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THE JUDGMENT: WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW IS MAN JUDGED?

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”
REV. XX. 12.

HAVING, in our last lecture, treated the subject of Death and Resurrection as these are regarded in the light of the New Church, we now proceed to examine the process by which the final condition of every soul is awarded—the great work of Judgment with especial regard to the three important questions: When the Judgment will take place, Where it will be accomplished, and How it will be effected.

Firstly, then, When will the Judgment take place? Consider, in this connection, the significant statement that “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Heb. ix. 27). Evidently, therefore, the Judgment occurs after death; and other passages imply that it takes place soon after death. For Scripture frequently represents the departed as already receiving the consequences of the lives they had lived on earth. When Moses and Elias appeared at our Lord’s Transfiguration, they are described as being “in glory” (Luk. ix. 30, 31), clearly showing that they were enjoying the appropriate results of their devotion to their Master’s service. When the rich man and Lazarus are represented as living in the spiritual world, they too are undoubtedly

experiencing the fruits sown during their period of probation; Lazarus resting at peace in Abraham's bosom, while the rich man, who had sinned so riotously, "lift up his eyes, being in torment" (Luke xvi. 22, 23). John twice fell down before the feet of an angel, so gloriously radiant that he regarded him as Divine; and this angel twice assured him that he was his fellow-servant, and of his brethren the prophets, that had the testimony of Jesus (Rev. xix. 10, xxii. 8, 9); proving that he too had passed into a condition which realized the result of his previous submission to the Lord's commandments. In these cases, we have the strongest possible representation of life. All the characters they place before us were in perfect sentient bodies, and were living in contrasted states of joy or woe. Why, we would ask, should another judgment be required? Would it be necessary to ascertain whether the condition in which they were presented was a just one? Surely the appointments of infinite wisdom and mercy need no revision! Hence we deduce this general law of the Divine order, that the dead, who are immediately raised, should immediately be judged; and that, after their judgment, they should at once enter upon their final state. And I appeal to you whether this is not a doctrine far stronger in its moral influence, and in spiritual helpfulness to us to refuse the evil and to choose the good, than any dogma which postpones the Judgment to some vast indefinite future, parted from the present by an almost immeasurable gulf.

Since, therefore, Judgment takes place immediately after death, Where is it accomplished? If effected after death, it clearly cannot take place on earth. Neither can we imagine it as any part of the activities of heaven; for the wicked would never be raised to those blissful seats into which "shall in no wise enter anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie" (Rev. xxi. 27). Equally impossible is it to suppose that the good would be degraded even to a

temporary abode in hell. The occurrence of the Judgment after death, therefore, involves the existence in the other world of a realm intermediate between heaven and hell. The existence of such a region in the spiritual world is abundantly taught in Scripture, and was universally believed in the primitive Christian Church. In later ages, however, when religion became corrupt, it was made so gross an engine of sacerdotal tyranny, by its perversion into the Romish figment of Purgatory, of which the priests held the keys, that Luther and the other Reformers, in their too indiscriminate zeal against abuses, unfortunately rejected the underlying element of truth, as well as the merely human incrustations wherewith it had become obscured.

From the many Scripture proofs that might be adduced in evidence of this Intermediate State, let us examine a very few. Call to remembrance the Lord's parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matt. xiii. 24-30). The point of the Divine fable is that the wheat and the tares were to abide together until the harvest, which was explained by the Lord as representing "the end of the world" (ver. 39). This phrase, however, requires a little explanation, because in the Greek it has no connection with the destruction of the material universe, being rightly translated "the consummation of the age," and referring to the close of the dispensation in relation to which it is employed—in the case of this particular parable, therefore, to the termination of the Christian Church. Thus it denotes the time of His Second Advent, when the dispensation which He was then inaugurating would be consummated, and another instituted in its place. The interval contemplated in the parable would, therefore, evidently endure for centuries after the Lord spoke, and through all this period the wheat and the tares were to dwell together. Now, think: Where could they thus abide? Certainly not on earth, where we know few remain much longer than the allotted

three-score years and ten. The good and the evil do indeed live together here. They then pass away, and continue their existence in the other world; and there, too, they are not separated until the consummation of the age, the harvest. Where, then, can they thus dwell together, both the good and the evil? Clearly neither in heaven nor hell. Evidently, therefore, an Intermediate State, a region or world between heaven and hell, is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the parable of the Wheat and the Tares.

Or consider a statement of the Apostle Peter, included in his great discourse delivered on the Day of Pentecost. "David," he says, "is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts ii. 34). If, however, at the time Peter preached that sermon, David had not ascended into heaven, where had he been living for the thousand years that had elapsed since his decease? Most certainly he had been alive, because God "is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him" (Luke xx. 38). If David had not ascended into heaven, certainly he was not cast down to hell. Clearly, therefore, he must have dwelt in some intermediate region of the spiritual world.

An equally striking illustration is supplied by the Apocalypse. "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. vi. 9, 10). Undoubtedly the condition here described existed after death, and was experienced by good people, whom we cannot imagine in hell. Yet, as certainly, their state was incomplete; they cried out for judgment and full satisfaction, and thus were not in heaven. Therefore Scripture plainly teaches the existence, in the eternal world, of a region neither heaven nor hell, but in the midst between the two and

introductory to both—a vast Intermediate State, called in the theology of the New Church, from the mixed characters of its inhabitants, the World of Spirits.

This doctrine is also eminently reasonable. Heaven or hell alike requires perfect consistency in its inhabitants. We cannot suppose that in heaven there exists either evil or error: we cannot imagine that anything of goodness or truth survives in hell. Yet who leaves this world thus entirely consistent? Are not good people, for the most part, burdened by infirmities and deficiencies of character?—frailties of temper, it may be; habits entailed by the unpropitious circumstances of their lifetime here; inherent weaknesses, their heritage from a sinful and benighted ancestry? They have mourned over these blemishes and struggled against them; they constitute no part of their voluntarily cherished nature; they long to be rid of them, yet they adhere. Very good people, also, are oftentimes in error as to faith, and they can take nothing untrue with them into heaven. Consider, moreover, the state of children; I am not speaking of infants, but children, who frequently exhibit traits of character selfish, stubborn, and unamiable, but who, seeing that their rationality is undeveloped, cannot possess a responsibility so complete as to warrant their eternal condemnation. Or contemplate the case of the heathen. There are millions of Gentiles upon earth, millions of Mohammedans and Jews, many of whom are just as faithful to their convictions, and have improved their opportunities as well, as very many Christians. Necessarily, however, they have been influenced by false doctrines, which have inevitably led them into many erroneous practices; and although such fallacies and errors have been guiltless, not one of them can enter heaven. So in the converse case of the wicked. The evil are generally habituated to something of outward goodness. They are not without the acquired *graces* of a courteous demeanour. They not unfre-

quently yield an intellectual assent to truth and perceive it with keen intelligence, and even with a proud satisfaction and delight in its discernment. These good things; however, are just as foreign to hell as the infirmities previously instanced are incompatible with heaven. Very few are at once fit for the final alternative which ultimately awaits each one. Hence the World of Spirits, or intermediate region of the eternal state, is a merciful provision of our heavenly Father's love, in order that the necessary complete preparation may therein be effected.

In this intermediate world, then, wake all the souls that pass from the earth by the change called death. Did you ever realize this stupendous immigration into the eternal spheres? From this earth alone it is calculated that no fewer than thirty-six millions of human beings pass yearly, which means a hundred thousand every day, four thousand every hour, or at the rate of more than one person for every second of time. Remember that they are from all lands, and of every time of life from infancy to extreme old age; they represent the most diverse conditions and qualities, both as to cultivation and character; and they are there judged with perfect mercy and justice, and to each is assigned his final home.

How is this vast process accomplished? What are the standards employed? what the tests according to which the state of each is ascertained? The text declares, "the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works;" and the uniform testimony of Scripture is to the same effect. Works are everywhere exhibited as the test in the Judgment; nowhere do we read in this connection of belief or faith. It is written in the Old Testament: "Also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for Thou renderest to everyman according to his work" (Ps. lxii. 12). "Thine eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to

give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. xxxii. 19). "O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways" (Ezek. xxxiii. 20). Our Lord Himself declares, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). He spake at least two parables with the express purpose of illustrating the subject of the Judgment, namely, the Talents and the Sheep and the Goats; and in each case, with a clearness and a force none can misunderstand, He displayed works as the only standard by which we shall be measured at the last. The doctrine of the apostles is similar. St. Paul teaches that God "will render unto every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 6). "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). Indeed, almost the last word in the Bible is its solemn assurance, "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12). The doctrine of the Word of God throughout, therefore, testifies that "the tree is known by its fruit" (Matt. xii. 33), the man judged according to his works.

Because in a man's works the whole of his life is concentrated. What I love and what I think are all comprised in what I do: without doing, desires even the purest, convictions even the truest, are all in vain. "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works" (Jas. ii. 18). For works afford the only standard of faith, of motive, and of character. In order, however, that works may thus supply an equitable test, they must be viewed deeply and comprehensively, according to the principle enunciated by our Lord, "Judge not according to the appearance, but

judge righteous judgment" (John vii. 24). Be sure that in the final assay of each, judgment will be thus perfectly righteous, and not merely according to the appearance manifest before the world. The motives underlying the life, the opportunities and circumstances limiting and qualifying the life, will all be accurately and generously considered. No one will be held accountable to a truth which he has never known, or will be required to reach a standard to which he has enjoyed no means of access. Our Lord affirms a law as just as it is merciful when He teaches, "That servant, who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke xii. 47, 48). Every violation of an essential law, even if done in ignorance, necessarily involves some suffering; but how different are the temporal privations and sorrows of those who unknowingly transgress, from the deep, heart-felt, abiding retribution of those who sin against the light! This doctrine is full of encouragement with regard to the millions of heathen who have never seen the truth, and to thousands of the untaught waifs and strays of our imperfect civilisation. None are required to conform to a law they have never known. Every one is responsible to that measure of truth which he has here understood and acknowledged to be righteous.

By what process will the works of a man be estimated? The text declares: "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Must we suppose, then, that the Almighty keeps a vast series of ledgers, in which the deeds of men are written down?

—or that His justice requires any formal tribunal, any external pomp of assize and judgment, to enunciate its behests? His omniscience is infinite; His laws are perfect, and, so far as their application to spiritual matters is illustrated by their operations in the realm of nature, they are self-operating and self-enforcing. There are books of judgment, most real and solemn, but they exist not outside of the man, but within him. "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond." But where? "It is graven upon the table of their heart" (Jer. xvii. 1). That is where sin records its register. Every man's mind and character is such a book, and each individual soul is his own book-keeper. No single act or motive or thought is ever wholly lost. Psychologists seem more and more to reach the conclusion that memory is indelible; that howsoever it may appear at times as though we forget, every impression once incorporated with the mind abides therein for ever. Consider also the law of habit. Whatsoever we are or do confirms the state of our life; it disposes us to continue in the same course, and thus moulds the very fabric and organization of our souls. Daily and hourly, therefore, we are writing our own books of judgment, the chronicles and catalogues of our own characters, the life-history of our own hearts. Every holy desire, every wise, noble thought, every generous deed is ineffaceably engraven. The case is precisely similar with our evil wishes, our iniquitous designs, and wicked actions. Indeed, the greater our effort to conceal outwardly what we are within, the deeper must be its internal record. The hypocrite, always solicitous to hide some secret sin, is, by the very necessity of the case, unceasingly remembering his shame, which is thus burned into his nature with a searing iron whose scars nothing can remove. Even on the features of the inert material body, good and evil alike write their *signatures*. How much more will this be the case with

the plastic sensitive soul? There, be sure, every one of us is making his eternal register; and hereafter these books will be opened and compared with that other book, "which is the book of life." For the character and actions of every man will be tested by the Divine Truth, so far as he has known it. Hence our Lord declares, "If any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John xii. 47, 48).

The books of human character are opened by the manifestation of the qualities which they record. Our Lord refers to this process in His solemn declaration, "Nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad" (Luke viii. 17). Surely this is a truth to rebuke our too frequent carelessness! The uncleansed hidden chambers of the heart, the corrupt aims we sometimes nurse in secret, the tortuous dirty paths stealthily trodden in the pursuit of our own selfish gain, the recesses of character and conduct concealed from our very nearest, are never really concealed. They are all recorded; unless repented of, they will all be manifested and declared in the eye of day. It is indeed occasion for thankfulness that repentance does actually erase the accusation; for, says the Lord, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him: in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live" (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22). May we all find grace, by such repentance to lay hold of the Divine assurance, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isa. xliii. 25).

What, then, is the manner in which this manifestation takes place? We are assured that after death every man continues essentially the same. The solemn sentence is fulfilled: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he who is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. xxii. 11). Death removes from the man nothing but the mere material shell. Consequently, in the other world all resume a life similar to that which they have lived in this. The good live and do good there as they did here; the evil crave after wickedness and pursue corrupt delights. Both do this with a thoroughness and freedom never possible on earth. The good are unfettered by the trammels of the flesh, unburdened of the weight of every merely inherited tendency, delivered from the constraining circumstances which here shut them in on every side. The bad are similarly freed from the artificial conventions of society, and from the considerations of respectability which here so frequently held them in check. Each gradually puts off everything merely external, every adventitious environment which forms no essential constituent of his character. He successively puts on whatever is needed to complete his real intrinsic state. Then the infirmities of the good, arising from constitutional defects—frailties inherited, it may be, from a long line of ancestry, but always loathed and resisted; the ignorance which has blinded them and impaired their energies—all the impediments and difficulties, against which they have so long and arduously struggled, will at length be removed for ever. They are no essential elements of their character, they are not loved but hated by them; thus they are cast aside. On the other hand, whatever instruction is necessary to complete their state is there furnished, and thus they are made fit for their heavenly home.

It is precisely similar in the opposite case. The *graces* of courtesy and culture beneath which the wicked

have veiled their corruptions, and which they have employed as snares and engines to deceive the world, are now stripped off. They, too, constitute no integral part of the characters to which they are attached; they are not loved for their own sakes, but only on account of the ulterior purposes they may be made to serve. Accordingly, in the state of entire sincerity upon which the soul has now entered, they are cheerfully relinquished. Thus is fulfilled the Saviour's declaration, "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have" (Luke viii. 18). Every class declares itself such as it really is. By the operation of the law of spiritual affinity, which even here causes like to consort with like, the good are attracted by the good, the evil gravitate towards the evil, and each at length finds his own place. Thus the Judgment, like all the processes of Divine order, is effected easily and spontaneously, but absolutely perfectly, with infallible precision and irresistible certainty.

Such is the ordinary process of individual judgment. Evidently, however, the Bible speaks of something more than this. It places before us the spectacle of a crisis of general exploration, exercised not on the individual, but upon communities—a great Judgment Day. This consideration, however, opens a new and important branch of our subject.

At death, as already seen, all enter the World of Spirits, and are there prepared for their eternal lot. But in corrupt, declining ages of the Church this work of preparation becomes very difficult. The prevailing ignorance and superstition entangle and adulterate the hearts and minds of men. Numbers of bigoted, stupid, ferocious, but conscientious people—like our own execrated and miserable queen, Mary Tudor, who seems to have been actuated by a sincere though utterly mistaken wish to do what was right—pass into the other life; spirits fit neither for heaven nor hell, whose quality

is so heterogeneously and inextricably blended, that of necessity they linger in the Intermediate State. Seeing, moreover, that that world and this are intimately conjoined, that being the medium through which we receive our influences from heaven, the result of such a disordered congested state there, is the establishment here of a condition of grossness and darkness. In the last ages of every Church, this connection, this mutual action and re-action of the natural and spiritual worlds, constitutes a joint hurrying of both to a state of ruin.

Therefore, when such a state is complete, which occurs at the end of every dispensation, the Lord enters the World of Spirits to accomplish a Judgment there, in order that He may divide the wheat from the tares, and separate between the sheep and the goats. Such a process attended His First Advent, when He declared, "For judgment I am come into this world" (John ix. 39). It is referred to in the Apostles' Creed in the clause "He descended into hell;" where instead of hell we should rather read Hades, the vast underworld, as the term originally signified, the general concourse of the departed. Thither the Lord descended, and there He accomplished a great work of Judgment. Just as on earth He cast out demons from the bodies of those whom they possessed, so He expelled from that intermediate region of the spiritual world the aggregate of evil spirits, who had established there an iniquitous and perilous supremacy. The New Testament has many significant allusions to this process. Thus the Lord declared, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out" (John xii. 31). "The prince of this world is judged" (John xvi. 11). Again He testified, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke x. 18). By this work of judgment, He caused the evil in the World of Spirits to be cast to their own appropriate abodes. The tares and the goats were *thus* assigned their proper places. The good, instructed

in the truth and thus prepared to receive His saving grace, were delivered from the condition of imperfect life in which they had been so long detained, and were raised into heaven by Him upon whom was the Spirit of the Lord, that He might proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound (Isa. lxi. 1). "He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Pet. iii. 19); where the word rendered "prison" is from a Greek root signifying to watch or guard, and thus quite as correctly denotes a place of safe detention. By the Judgment He then accomplished He reduced the spiritual world to order, preparatory to the establishment of His Christian dispensation here on earth.

Similarly, when, in course of ages, Christianity itself declined, and the Second Advent became essential, that spiritual coming of our Lord was accompanied, according to prophecy, by its appropriate work of Judgment. The scene of this Last Judgment, as of every other general judgment by which it was preceded, was the great intermediate World of Spirits, and its subjects were the legions of confused and entangled souls who were congregated there. For ages of debased and embruted Christianity had again produced a state of congestion and disorder in that sphere, which is the first abode of all who leave the earth, the nearest point of contact between ourselves and the eternal state, and the channel through which we receive the helpful influences of heaven. Consequently the Lord again descended thither, and, as witnessed by Swedenborg,¹ restored order there, removing the evil hosts which had intervened between Himself and man, and thus rendering possible the descent upon earth of those principles of light and life which constitute the New Jerusalem, His last and crowning dispensation.

¹ See his work, *The Last Judgment*, and his smaller *Continuation* on the same subject.

Our wisdom is to use the increased strength and knowledge thus secured for us in preparing for our own individual judgment. Because no long delay can now take place in the World of Spirits. In consequence of the thorough restoration established there by the Last Judgment, the particular judgment of every separate soul now takes place immediately after death; no one, as we are taught in the Writings of the New Church, lingering in that Intermediate State more than about thirty years. Therefore let each heed the solemn warning, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2). Now, the works by which we must be judged can be changed. Now, the books which will hereafter be opened, with their accounts for ever closed, lie before us for our erasures, and awaiting our new entries. What are we writing there every day? Remember the endless significance of every most seemingly trivial word and work, which we are so thoughtlessly adding to the indelible record of our lives and characters. Our daily actions are the blocks wherewith we are building either our glorious palace, "eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. v. 1), or some grim dungeon in the regions of the lost. By them we shall be judged because by them we are being made. Therefore, "seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isa. lv. 6, 7).

The Resurrection :

How and When do the Dead Arise ?

A Lecture

BY THE
REV. JOHN PRESLAND

ARGYLE SQUARE CHURCH, KING'S CROSS, LONDON



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THE RESURRECTION: HOW AND WHEN DO THE DEAD ARISE?

“Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.”—LUKE xx. 37, 38.

UR previous lectures have dealt with the origin of the New Church through the decay of former religious dispensations, and the accomplishment of the Lord's Second Coming by the revelation of the spiritual wisdom of His Divine Word. In the light of the interior sense thus unfolded, we have reviewed the fundamental doctrines of the New Church respecting God, Man, and Salvation. We now, therefore, approach the consideration of our immortal future—the destiny for which we were created in the beginning and redeemed by our Lord at the time of His Incarnation, and for which He is now continually seeking to save every one of us, through the regenerating influences of His Holy Spirit. The present subject is our mode of entrance upon this future—the Resurrection; especially with regard to the questions, How and When do the dead arise?

As the basis for this inquiry, we take the important statement of our Lord: “Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him.” Spoken in reply to the Sadducees, “who deny that there is any resurrection” (ver. 27), the immediate object of these words was to demonstrate the truth that “the dead are raised” (ver. 37). The argument is this: At the time of

the Divine appearance to Moses in the burning bush, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had long left this world. If Jehovah was then their God, therefore, He must have been either the God of decayed corpses or the God of living men. But it is emphatically stated that "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living;" the inference thus being imperative that, at the time of the burning bush, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had actually experienced whatever is meant by the Resurrection. What, then, is involved in this important fact?

In the first place, it clearly proves that the Resurrection does not include the resuscitation of buried corpses. The earthly remains of the patriarchs were still in the cave of Machpelah, where their dust had long returned to its kindred dust. Without their material forms, therefore, they had risen from the dead: they were actually alive, and God was their God. Their case was instanced by the Lord Jesus as a proof of the Resurrection: wherefore a complete and final Resurrection does not include the revivification of the dead natural body.

The question then arises: Is existence conceivable without a body? Certainly not—life or essence, apart from form, is wholly unimaginable. The mistake, however, too frequently made in connection with this subject, is in supposing that the material covering we now wear is our only body. For the soul itself is an organized human form. As so strongly asserted by the Apostle, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44). He does not say that a natural body exists now, and a spiritual body will be created some day; but that, now and here, there is a spiritual body. The spiritual body, indeed, fills the natural; it animates it, and corresponds to it in form and faculty. Why should the eye see, or the ear hear, or the hand feel? There is no life in the inert matter of which they are composed. It can only be because they are filled with a living organism which actually is alive. Every part of

the body thus contains its spiritual equivalent, just as the glove, when in use, is occupied by the hand. Withdraw the hand, and the glove lies motionless; remove the spiritual form from the natural, and the latter dies. In other respects, such as weight, size, and structure, it remains for a while unchanged; but gradually and speedily it is resolved into its constituent elements, thus proving that, now and here, "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

The existence of such spiritual body is further demonstrated by the fact that its faculties have frequently been roused to activity, even during the present life on earth. Because the spiritual world—for the sake of which, primarily, the spiritual body exists—is not remote from us; it is no distant sphere, myriads of miles beyond the stars. It is very near, around us and within, and it acts upon us continually, and most intimately and mightily, either for good or evil. Possessing, therefore, in his spiritual body, organs adapted for use in the spiritual world, man may—if the Divine Providence sees fit—even now witness the realities of that world and hear its sounds. Did you ever contemplate the force of the declaration, "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spake, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer"? (1 Sam. ix. 9). Why so called, however, unless because he saw? And what should he see, to procure him such a title, unless things not revealed to the common eye? A seer was simply one who had his spiritual sight opened, and was thus qualified to behold the wonders of the other world. We frequently read of persons thus privileged. Balaam, for example, describes himself as "the man whose eyes are open" (Num. xxiv. 3); of course not his physical eyes, for these were opened in all the men and women around him, but the eyes of the spirit. Again: when Elisha and his servant were beleaguered in the city of Dothan

by the hosts of Ben-hadad, king of Syria, the young man was greatly alarmed, and cried in terror, "Alas, my master ! how shall we do ? And he answered, Fear not : for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray Thee, open his eyes, that he may see." His bodily eyes were already opened, and saw, clearly enough, the sights that so alarmed him. But he had other eyes, those of his spiritual body, which the Lord opened ; "and he saw : and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 15-17). Nor are the eyes the only faculties of which we read in connection with the spiritual body. John testifies, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet" (Rev. i. 10). Indeed, all the phenomena recorded in the book of Revelation are spiritual in their character, belonging not to this but to the other world, and the subjects, not of natural, but spiritual discernment. Without quitting his rocky exile in Patmos, John, by the opening of the faculties of his spiritual body, saw the transcendent wonders of the eternal world. He heard the songs chanted by the hosts of heaven (v. 9, xiv. 3, xv. 3) ; felt the reviving touch of the Son of man, before whose glory he had fallen down as dead (i. 17) ; tasted the little book which in his mouth was sweet as honey, but which was bitter afterwards (x. 10) ; and smelt the fragrance of the incense that ascended before the throne (v. 8, viii. 3, 4). So with the prophetic visions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah : it was solely by the opening of their spiritual faculties, that they enjoyed their unusual and wonderful experiences. The inference is, of course, imperative : we possess other organs than those of the natural frame ; the faculties of the soul, the sentient powers of the spiritual body. Thus, also, the further conclusion is forced upon us, that the soul *is itself* a substantial, completely organized human form.

Indeed, if we consider profoundly enough, we shall find that the spiritual body is the only real and enduring man. It is wrong to teach our little children to say, I have a soul. Rather should we instruct them that they are souls and that they possess bodies. The natural form of clay is but a mere instrument, adjoined to the man, for the sake of his existence in this present world. It is no more a constituent of his immortal nature than a diver's cumbrous dress of iron and leather is inseparable from the wearer. The diver puts on his complicated apparatus that he may breathe and work beneath the water ; and man is clothed in his material vesture that he may live in a gross natural world. While under water, moreover, the diver draws every breath from the upper air. If the communication were for one moment intercepted, the man would be suffocated. Similarly, the material body in which we are enveloped on this earth, lives by perpetual intercourse with the spiritual world : separated therefrom, it would instantaneously perish. Now and here, therefore, the spiritual body is itself the real essential man. Consequently, hereafter, at the resurrection, the material vestment is laid aside for ever. Just as the diver, when ashore, puts off with rejoicing the ugly and heavy costume that has served him in the water, so man, raised into the finer atmospheres of the eternal world, leaves behind the body which has enabled him to live and act in a state of material grossness, but which, in the new conditions to which he has arisen, would but constitute an encumbrance. This is, at any rate, the doctrine suggested by the text ; and this, I believe we shall have no difficulty in demonstrating, is confirmed by the entire Scripture, from beginning to end.

Take, as an illustration, our Lord's own language—we cannot well get a higher testimony—as presented in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. "It came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels

into Abraham's bosom : the rich man also died, and was buried " (Luke xvi. 22). Immediately, the scene of their activities is transferred to the spiritual world. How are they thus displayed?—as formless, disembodied? We read of Abraham's bosom, the rich man's eyes and tongue, and of Lazarus's finger (vers. 22–24), evidently proving that they were both living in bodies ; certainly, however, not in the natural bodies which they had left in the grave ; consequently in their spiritual bodies, which had arisen. These bodies, moreover, were manifestly of perfect human form, of complete substantiality, and of intensely vivid sensibility. Nor was such embodiment subsequent to any general resurrection, for the rich man's father's house was still peopled by his five brethren, who were thus living in the present world (vers. 27, 28). The doctrine established by this instructive parable, then, is surely this,—that immediately after death the soul continues alive, in form and faculty a real organized man, as certainly as during its residence in this lower world.

Or turn to the last book of the sacred canon. " I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held " (Rev. vi. 9). John saw souls, you perceive. Next, he proceeds to tell us what these souls said : " They cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth ? " (ver. 10). Evidently these souls were endowed with organs of speech. He then informs us that " white robes were given unto every one of them " (ver. 11), thus proving that these souls were possessed of bodies capable of wearing clothing. Nor is the vision prophetic of events to follow any general resurrection ; for it is declared " that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, *should be fulfilled* " (ibid).

Again, we read : " When I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not : for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them who keep the sayings of this book : worship God " (Rev. xxii. 8, 9). John perceives a presence so glorious that he throws himself at his feet, under the impression that the appearance which breaks upon his vision is Divine. Yet this radiant being testifies that he had once lived on earth, " I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets ; " that he had died, therefore, and risen again. Certainly not with his natural body ; though, as certainly, he possessed a body far more adequate for his magnificent celestial activities than the earthly frame he had left behind. For what conceivable purpose, we would ask, should his material corpse be resumed ?

Turn to the doctrine of the Apostles, where—in a chapter perhaps more misinterpreted, on this particular theme, than any other part of the Divine Word—we read, " It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body " (1 Cor. xv. 44). Ponder the significance of this beautiful illustration. The Resurrection is compared with the change that takes place with the seed, once sown in the cold, dark earth, when it bears its beauty and blossom into the light and air. So, the Apostle teaches, is it with a man. He, too, is sown by birth into the natural world ; and the purpose of such sowing is that, now and here, he may prepare for a spiritual state. Just as the seed perishes in order that the plant may grow, so, that the man may develope, the body dies ; for, says the Apostle, " that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die " (ver. 36). And as the plant differs from the seed, so the resurrection body differs from the form that was worn in time : " That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain :

but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body" (vers. 37, 38). The body in which we exist here, therefore, is no more the same in which we shall live hereafter, than the seed sown is the same thing as the developed, living plant. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (ver. 44). This, then, is the only resurrection of which the Scripture speaks. It often, and forcibly, treats of the resurrection of the dead; it is absolutely silent regarding the resuscitation of dead bodies: and this, you will admit, is a most significant distinction.

In our Authorized Version, however, we find one exception to this rule. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. xxvi. 19). Here it is distinctly said that "my dead body shall arise;" and an objector might fairly challenge us to explain so positive a statement consistently with the doctrine that the material form is relinquished at death for ever. Compare, then, with this passage, the statement respecting the "other lords" besides Jehovah God who had had dominion over Israel: "They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise" (vers. 13, 14). If, therefore, the passage we are considering teaches the resurrection of the body, it proves that this resurrection is confined to the good, and that the wicked will not experience it at all. But the real reference of the text in question is acknowledged, by all scholarly advocates of the material resuscitation itself, to be to the restoration of the Jews from their Babylonian captivity, and to have no direct connection with any other subject. Bishop Lowth, for instance, a divine of the Established Church, and certainly no supporter of the special theology preached from this *pulpit*, translates the passage thus:

"Thy dead shall live ; my deceased, they shall rise :
 Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust !
 For thy dew is as the dew of the dawn ;
 But the earth shall cast forth, as an abortion, the
 deceased tyrants.

To this he appends the accompanying note: "The deliverance of the people of God from a state of the lowest depression, is explained by images plainly taken from the resurrection of the dead. In the same manner the Prophet Ezekiel represents the restoration of the Jewish nation from a state of utter dissolution, by the restoring of the dry bones to life, exhibited to him in a vision, chap. xxxvii., which is directly thus applied and explained, vers. 11-13. And this deliverance is expressed with a manifest opposition to what is here said above, ver. 14, of the great lords and tyrants under whom they had groaned ;

'They are dead, they shall not live ;
 They are deceased tyrants, they shall not rise :'

that they should be destroyed utterly, and should never be restored to their former power and glory." So that this passage—the only one, remember, which distinctly asserts the resuscitation of buried corpses—is acknowledged, by a believer in that doctrine, to be grossly mistranslated, and, when rightly interpreted, to refer to quite another subject.

The same is true of Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, to which Bishop Lowth has himself directed our attention ; and which he explains as prophesying the restoration of the Jews from their Babylonish exile. Thus we read : "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11). A similar explanation applies to the parallel statement: "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan.

xii. 2). If this relates to the Resurrection, in the ordinary sense of the term, it clearly teaches that only many shall awake, thus that some will certainly continue to slumber. The context, however, makes it sufficiently manifest that the object of the passage is, in the first place, political, referring to the historical restoration of the Jews from their Chaldean bondage; and, secondly, spiritual, signifying besides the vivification of those who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1).

Granted, however, that the resurrection of the material body is nowhere expressly mentioned in the Word, is it not necessarily implied? Surely it is involved in the well-known passage, "I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* He shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: and *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me" (Job xix. 25-27). Do not forget, however, the testimony of an authority no whit inferior to Job on the subject of that life and immortality which our Saviour Jesus Christ hath brought to light through the gospel (2 Tim. i. 10). St. Paul teaches, "This I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Cor. xv. 50). If embarrassing to find Job at variance with Paul, what if he prove inconsistent with himself? Yet he says, "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." (Job vii. 9). Evidently the former passage cannot bear the meaning commonly ascribed to it. Observe the *italics* in which it abounds,—the words, *day*, *worms*, and *body*, all of which are essential to render it the expression of belief in a material resurrection—are printed in characters which testify that there is nothing equivalent to them in the original Hebrew. In fact the patriarch Job is not *here* speaking about death, decay, or resurrection at all.

The whole chapter refers to the period of his severest distresses. He was afflicted to the uttermost; his friends and the very wife of his bosom were all unjust; he seemed forsaken by God and men. The declaration quoted forms part of his pathetic appeal for sympathy and justice. He expresses his conviction that, notwithstanding all appearances, God would at length testify his innocence. Hence St. Chrysostom, and after him the Dutch Protestant theologian, Hugh Grotius, translate the passage thus: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He, at last, will stand in the field;" meaning that He would prove Himself the victor, triumphing over all opponents, who would be driven, as it were, from the arena of contest. "Although they," the boils and blains from which he was suffering, "should not only consume my skin, but also this," the substance beneath the skin; "nevertheless in my flesh I shall see God—I, I say, with these mine eyes, and not another for me." No word, you see, about dying, but an assertion of his faith that, in the present world, his character and integrity should be vindicated. To precisely the same effect Dr. Simon Patrick, Bishop of Ely—who, as Dean of Peterborough, had resisted the encroachments of James II.—paraphrases the passage: "For my hope, which was as dead as myself (xvii. 13, 15, xix. 10), begins to revive, because, though I seem for the present to be forsaken of God, yet I know that He can hereafter deliver me out of this miserable condition, since He lives for ever; and will, I doubt not, at last appear victorious over all the enemies which now oppress me. And though the worms, which have eaten my skin, should proceed to consume the rest of this wretched body; yet I feel my soul inspired with a comfortable belief, that before I die"—not "after my resurrection," be it noted, but "before I die"—"I shall see myself restored, by the mercy of God, to a happy estate. He will not let me always lie under these reproaches; but I begin to assure myself, that with these

very eyes I shall see Him vindicate my innocence : not only others, but I myself shall live to see it." Observe how entirely this pious trust was confirmed. "The Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before ;" and the grateful patriarch acknowledged, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth Thee" (xlii. 10, 5). "In my flesh shall I see God," had been his trust : "now mine eye seeth Thee," became his confession. All competent commentators, therefore, however devoted to the dogma of the material resurrection, acknowledge that this passage, at least, has no connection with the subject. Indeed this, or something like it, is the case with every text that is supposed to teach this doctrine ; and Scripture nowhere asserts the resuscitation of the natural body.

Was not the resurrection of Jesus, then, the pledge and type of ours? He, we are assured, rose with His whole body complete ; and did not the beloved disciple, who knew as much of his Lord's nature and providence as any born of woman, testify, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John iii. 2). If the Lord rose with His whole body, does not the declaration that "we shall be like Him," imply that, in the other life, we too shall possess our complete bodies? Of course we shall rise with the spiritual body complete, but it by no means follows that we shall resume the material frame. For, consider : How shall we be like our Lord? Shall we resemble Him in the fact that the material body will escape corruption? Certainly not. Shall we be like Him in that it will be glorified, its substance transmuted into what is Divine? Certainly not. Shall we, like Him, ascend far above all heavens, that we may fill all things? (Eph. iv. 10). Again, certainly not. We shall find the assertion of our *likeness* to the Lord illustrated by a comparison with the

converse statement, "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. ii. 17). For although the Lord was in all things made like unto us, He had no human father; and His body was capable of walking on the water, of becoming invisible, and of accomplishing Divine marvels. In what, then, did His likeness to us consist? Doubtless in His human form and organization, but especially in the moral character which He inherited. As, therefore, the resemblance to us, which the Lord assumed by incarnation, yet admitted of such wide and essential distinctions, so the likeness to Himself, which we are promised in the resurrection, may be compatible with a considerable difference, and—if the analogy is to be complete—will even require such difference. Thus the apostle continues, "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1 John iii. 3). The hope is that we shall see Him as He is; and the condition of such vision, that we should purify ourselves even as He is pure, arises from the fact that none but "the pure in heart" are blessed with the promise that "they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). The resemblance to the risen Lord which is here asserted, therefore, is evidently spiritual and moral—to be pure "as He is pure;" and there is no warrant whatever for concluding, from this passage, that man will rise from the grave with his material body.

The connection between the Lord's resurrection and our own receives further elucidation from the doctrine of St. Paul. "Now is Christ risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming" (1 Cor. xv. 20-23). With regard to the resurrection, the Lord was, of course, the "first-fruits," the word for which, in the original

Greek, literally signifies "from the beginning;" for, from the very beginning, when the prophecy went forth, "it shall bruise thy head" (Gen. iii. 15), all hope of resurrection—whether of the elevation of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the hosts that have risen before and after them, from corporeal death to spiritual life, or whether of the quickening of those who were previously dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. ii. 1)—was actually secured for us by the seed of the woman, the Divine Saviour Himself. But observe the terms employed by the apostle. His Greek, translated "every man in his own order," would be more correctly rendered "each in his own order;" the purpose being to discriminate, not between the various characters and consequently differing states of glory in the other life, of different men, but between the resurrection of Christ on the one hand and of man on the other. Besides, the phrase "each in his own order" has no necessary relation to sequence of time. The Greek literally signifies, "in his own rank," and implies a distinction, not of time, but of degree; and a similar reference is admissible in the word translated "afterwards." His apparent postponement of the Resurrection until the Second Advent, might well receive more attention than our present limits permit; but it must be evident from the text, and from the instances of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 22-31), and of those already risen who are described in the Revelation (vi. 9-11, xxii. 8, 9), that no such postponement is actually intended. Like all the apostles of the first advent, Paul looked for the Saviour's reappearance at an early date, possibly during his own lifetime, and thus evidently did not enjoy a full revelation upon the subject. Besides, the coming of the Lord is frequently used to denote His approach to every individual soul by His messenger of death; in which sense the declaration, "Each in his own rank: Christ the first-fruits; afterward *they that are Christ's* at His coming," is manifestly filled

with solemn and instructive meaning. In any case, the whole passage testifies that our resurrection is different from the Lord's. We can readily perceive a reason why it should be so. He glorified His Humanity that it might constitute an eternal means of access between Himself and all who should still be living in this natural world. He is the "Last" as well as the "First," because there is an eternal necessity for Him to possess means of communication with the very confines even of the material creation. There is no similar reason why we should retain a natural body in the other world. When we pass hence we have done with the present sphere for ever, and we lay aside the material body because, in the spiritual state upon which we shall then have entered, it would simply burden us with a useless encumbrance.

Indeed, why should we retain it? St. Paul says, "We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight :) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 6-8). Absence from the body is the condition of presence with the Lord, and, "in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11). If absence from the body is presence with the Lord, while presence with the Lord is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore, why should we seek to be again hampered and trammelled with the material clay? As well might the butterfly, flitting from flower to flower, a form of light and beauty, creep back into the grovelling caterpillar! As well might the lark stoop from his song in the airy blue to imprison himself in the dark confinement of the egg! O no! The resurrection which awaits us, immediately on the death of the "muddy vesture of decay" which now environs us, is uninterrupted life, in a substantial organism, perfectly adapted for the activities of our

new and brighter home. Just as definitely as the Apostles' Creed, the New Church affirms its faith in the resurrection of the body ; but it maintains that, for a spiritual world, a spiritual body is required. For the spiritual alone is real, alive, enduring. The present world, the state in which we now live, the possessions we now enjoy, are, by their very nature, illusory and transient. The only substantial and abiding satisfactions lie beyond.

“ Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until death tramples it to fragments.”¹

That which we call death is but the removal of the illusions which now deceive us, the brightening of the obscurities which here darken our path. In the view of the New Church, therefore, death becomes most literally the Gate of Life, the usher, immediately, into a state adequate to every holy aspiration and desire.

“ Those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends.”²

“ I am the Resurrection and the Life,” saith the Lord : “ he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live : and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this ? ” (John xi. 26). May every heart find grace to exclaim, “ Lord, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief ” (Mark ix. 24).

¹ Shelley : *Adonais*, 52.

² Tennyson : *In Memoriam*, cxvii.

